

Space, Gender and Work:
The experiences and identities of female street traders in central
Pinetown, Durban

by
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Submitted in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the
Degree of Master of Social Science (Geography and Environmental
Management) in the School of Environmental Sciences,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Durban
South Africa

March 2009

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Social Science, in the Graduate Programme in Geography,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Social Science in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously, for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Abstract

Poverty and unemployment are critical challenges that confront the post-apartheid government. Over a decade has passed since the implementation of the neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), and the policy has largely failed to address the socio-economic inequalities in South Africa. As a result of the lack of job opportunities in the country, many South Africans participate in the growing informal economy. Although there are more men employed informally, women tend to dominate certain sectors such as street trading. Research indicates that many female street traders are the sole providers for their dependants, and thus rely heavily on the small income that is generated. As women, female traders are also tasked with managing their households and taking care of their families. The thesis aims to explore the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work experiences at home and in the informal economy. The empirical research for this study was conducted in the Hill Street informal market, which is located in the central Pinetown area, within the eThekweni Municipality.

In order to address the research problem, this study adopts a feminist approach that highlights the engendered binary logic that pervades western spatial thought. Spatial binaries, such as the space/place and public/private dualisms, are intimately linked to gender. Whilst notions of home in the private sphere are thought to embody feminine characteristics, public space is typically encoded masculine. Feminist geographers argue that how space is conceptualised matters to the construction of gendered identities, in that gender and space are mutually constitutive. In this study a range of qualitative, interpretive techniques are used to explore the meanings that female street traders attach to their work spaces and to their identities as women. By exploring the everyday work activities of female street traders, as they move between engendered public and private space, attention is drawn to how the working experiences of these women both challenge and reproduce traditional ways of conceptualising space and gender.

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List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
CBD	Central Business District
DIT	Department of Trade and Industry
GDMA	Greater Durban Metropolitan Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GHS	General Household Survey
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NSCLC	North and South Central Local Councils
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SEWU	Self-Employed Women's Union
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
VAT	Value Added Tax

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dianne Scott, for all of her help and support during the process of conceptualising and producing this thesis. Prof. Scott's guidance and encouragement were invaluable in helping me persevere and complete this research project.

I would also like to thank Sibongile Buthelezi for her assistance in translating the interviews that were conducted for this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the women who generously gave up their time to be interviewed during the empirical study.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Street trading is an important sector in the South African informal economy, which provides employment to millions of women in the country (Devey et al., 2007). Many female street traders are the sole breadwinners in their households. These women rely heavily on their informal employment to support them and their dependants (Lund et al., 2000). In order to survive, female traders are tasked with generating an income from their trade, as well as completing their domestic chores and taking care of their families. Managing a business and a household can be challenging, and female traders employ a range of strategies in order to negotiate their different work activities across time and space.

Framed within a feminist approach, this thesis aims to explore the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work experiences, in both their home and informal work spaces. In order to achieve this objective, theory from various feminist and social geographers is consulted. Feminist geographers argue that concepts of 'home' in the private sphere and 'work' in the public sphere are engendered. Whilst home is commonly accepted as 'a woman's place', public space is typically conceptualised as embodying masculine characteristics (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994; McDowell and Massey, 1996; McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). The theoretical framework adopted in this study draws attention to the intimate connection between engendered notions of space and the construction of gendered identities. Traditionally confined to the private home space, women tended to construct feminine identities in relation to their domestic activities and interactions (Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). The everyday working realities of female street traders, however, blur the public/private divide. This thesis is interested in exploring how, through their work experiences, female street traders are both challenging and reproducing traditional notions of space, place and gender. This empirical study focuses on the work experiences of a sample of legal female street

traders operating in the Pinetown central business district (CBD), in the eThekwin Municipality.¹

1.2 Research rationale

A great deal of literature is available on the informal economy in South Africa (Lund, 1998; Rogerson, 2004; Skinner, 2005; Devey et al., 2006, 2007). This literature tends to focus on documenting the nature and growth of the informal economy, in relation to the structural changes that have taken place in the country's economy since the implementation of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy (see for example Budlender et al., 2001; Skinner, 2005; Devey et al., 2006, 2007). The participation of women in the informal economy has also been researched in some detail. A range of studies have provided demographic information on female street traders and detailed descriptions of their working conditions (see for example Lund, 1998; Lund and Skinner, 1999). A body of policy orientated literature also exists that explores the extent to which women are able to access, and benefit from, policy initiatives that are designed to support informal workers (see for example Skinner, 1999, 2000; Valodia, 2001; Rogerson, 2004).

This study is important because it approaches women's participation in the informal economy from a different perspective. Firstly, this project considers the working realities of female street traders in a holistic manner, by taking into account the complex ways in which they co-ordinate their informal and domestic work activities across time and space. Secondly, this project uses a feminist methodology to draw attention to the subjectivities of female traders. Thus this project focuses on how these women experience and feel about their work both in the informal economy and in their households. Much of the existing literature tends to focus exclusively on the difficulties experienced by female traders in the workplace. This study considers these challenging issues alongside a discussion of the aspects that female traders enjoy about their work, and the ways in which these women have gained a sense of empowerment through their

¹ In terms of the 2000 Municipal Systems Act (No.32 of 2000) the boundaries of the then Greater Durban Metropolitan Area were redrawn and the area was renamed the eThekwin Municipality. The city, however, is still referred to as Durban.

work experiences. This understanding acknowledges the links and interconnections between female traders' dual roles as both caregivers and breadwinners in their households. These insights may be beneficial to policy-makers in the future who are interested in building capacity amongst female traders, and who wish to address some of the problems and concerns experienced by women in the informal economy.

This study is also significant in terms of its application of feminist geography theory to the research topic. This thesis adopts a feminist geography approach to explore the work experiences of female street traders, and the identities that they construct in relation to these experiences. The literature review focuses on theory that explores the mutually constitutive relationship between notions of space and gendered identities (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999). The theoretical framework is applied to understand the ways in which female traders actively shape their identities as women, through their interaction and connections within the spaces that they inhabit. In order to understand the meanings that female street traders attach to their work spaces, an auto-photography technique was used. This innovative technique allowed the research participants to photograph their lives and experiences in their domestic and informal work spaces. Taking an approach that considers the influence of the work spaces of women in the construction, reproduction and contestation of their identities, offers a fresh perspective to the growing body of literature on the informal economy in South Africa.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

This research aims to explore the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work experiences, in both their domestic and informal work spaces. This study is guided by three research objectives that support the aim. The three objectives are as follows:

1. To describe the work experiences of female street traders at home and in the informal economy.

2. To explore the meanings that female street traders attach to their domestic and informal work spaces.
3. To identify and reflect on the identities that female traders construct in relation to their diverse work experiences.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework that guides this research project. This framework draws from theory produced by a number of key social and feminist geographers writing on space, gender and work (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999; Bondi and Christie, 2003). In this chapter an attempt is made to briefly review how space has been theorised within the discipline of human geography over the last few decades. Particular attention is paid to theory that explores the dialectical relationship between gender and space (Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1999). It is from this literature that the theoretical framework applied in this study is derived.

Chapter Three contextualises the work experiences of female street traders in Hill Street, Durban. The chapter begins by describing the impacts of the GEAR strategy on poverty and unemployment in South Africa. Because of the high levels of unemployment in the country, many South Africans turn to the informal economy to earn an income (Devey et al., 2007). This chapter focuses specifically on the street trading sector within the informal economy. The chapter discusses the working conditions of street traders in Durban, as well as national and local policy that impacts on their lives. The discussion presented in this chapter is important in order to create an understanding of the everyday working realities of female street traders, and to situate the work experiences of female traders operating in Hill Street.

The research methodology is outlined in Chapter Four. This study adopts a feminist methodology which determines the qualitative techniques selected to both produce and interpret the data. In this study sixteen intensive interviews were conducted with legal,

female street traders operating in the Pinetown CBD. Six of the women who were interviewed were asked to participate further in an auto-photography task. This sample of traders was then interviewed a second time in order to describe and interpret the images that they had taken. The details regarding the sampling techniques, data production strategies and methods of analysis, are outlined in the chapter. Within Chapter Four an effort is also made to explore issues of power and positionality that impacted on all levels of the research process.

The presentation of the empirical results is presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Within these chapters the theoretical framework is applied to interpret the empirical data. The final conclusion chapter summarises the research findings and reflects on the results through a short discussion. In this chapter, areas for future research are outlined.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework that informs this study. As a feminist geography project, this study draws its literature from theory developed by key feminist geographers writing on space, gender and work. In particular, the theoretical framework draws attention to the engendered nature of spatial discourse in western thought (Rose, 1993; Dixon and Jones III, 2006). According to the literature, notions of space and place are engendered, whereby space is seen to embody masculine characteristics and place is typically encoded feminine. Furthermore, the space/place dualism is understood to be conceptually linked to a number of associated spatial binaries that are commonly used to interpret everyday life, such as global/local and public/private (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994; McDowell and Massey, 1996; Domosh and Seager, 2001).

Feminist geographers stress that conceptualising space in this way has impacted on, and continues to impact on, gender relations and the construction of gendered identities (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1999). According to the literature, concepts of space and gendered identities are mutually constitutive (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999). Because of the nature of this relationship, challenging engendered notions of place/space and public/private necessitate a change in gender definitions (Massey, 1994). In contemporary society, many women have left home in the private sphere to work for a wage in the public realm. Moving across engendered spaces, these women are effectively reinforcing and subverting conventional ways in which space and gender are conceptualised (Massey, 1995; McDowell, 1997, 2004a; Bondi and Christie, 2003).

Section 2.2 in this chapter reviews how space has been conceptualised within the discipline of human geography over the last few decades. The section begins by describing the physical concept of space that dominated thinking during the quantitative

revolution in the 1950/60s. In the 1970s, however, this particular perspective began to be criticised as human geographers redefined space as a social construct (Kitchen, 2006). The remainder of Section 2.2 explores theories of socially constructed space. Presenting an overview of spatial thinking within the discipline is necessary in order to situate the theoretical contribution made by feminist geographers. The remainder of the chapter explores the feminist contribution to theorising space and gender. Section 2.3 introduces the aims and theoretical focus of feminist geography. This discussion describes the engendered nature of western spatial thinking. The public/private divide is of particular interest to this study. Section 2.4 explores the public/private dualism and the social construction of 'home' and 'work' spaces. The final section in the chapter examines the dialectical relationship between concepts of space and gendered identities in the context of work in contemporary societies.

2.2 Conceptualising space

Space is a central concept in geography and how it is conceptualised is important to this study. Over the years, geographers have developed, debated and redefined the concept of space (Hubbard et al., 2002; Agnew, 2005; Hubbard, 2005). This section provides a brief introduction to the conceptualisation of space within the discipline since the quantitative revolution in the 1950/60s. Understanding the shifts in spatial thinking over time is important in order to contextualise the theoretical contribution made by feminist geographers. The theorisation of space by leading feminist geographers is presented in Section 2.3.

2.2.1 Physical space

Between the late 1930s and the early 1950s, the regional approach dominated human geography (Peet, 1998). This approach was largely descriptive and empirical in nature. Regional geographers focused on gathering information about different areas in order to compare their unique characteristics, and to explore the linkages between regions around the globe (Kitchen, 2006). During this period, human geographers adopted an 'absolute' concept of space, whereby physical space was conceptualised "as a distance

pure, simple and quantifiable” (Peet, 1998, 20). Geographical or physical space, in an absolute sense, is thus understood as the physical distance between objects. This distance is expressed in metric units, such as miles or kilometres. Drawing from an absolute spatial understanding, regional geographers mapped and described geographical regions around the world (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971).

In the early fifties, however, the regional approach began to face serious criticism. During this period the discipline was undergoing fundamental changes as science and scientific methods gained increased popularity in social research (Peet, 1998). Regional geography was not ‘scientific’ and critics argued that the research produced by the approach lacked explanatory and theoretical power (Peet, 1998). On the other hand, the benefits of adopting a scientific approach and methodology were being promoted by leading human geographers. It was argued that science would allow the discipline to attain intellectual respectability and produce research that was systematic, analytical and explanatory. By the late 1950s, human geographers began to adopt positivism and the discipline was reconstituted as a ‘spatial science’ (Peet, 1998). In this regard, David Harvey’s (1969) seminal text *Explanation in Geography* was highly influential. Drawing from the esteemed positivist philosophy, human geographers began to apply a scientific logic and methodology to social science research (Peet, 1998). In the spirit of science, attempts were made to apply mathematical and scientific models in order to expose universal laws that were assumed to govern society and human behaviour (Cloke et al., 1991). It was hoped that these general laws could also allow geographers to predict and shape spatial patterns and behaviour in the future (Kitchen, 2006).

From the 1950s, geographers began applying a relative concept of space more frequently (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971). Unlike absolute space, relative space remains rooted in physical space, although it is not defined exclusively in terms of Euclidean distance. Instead relative space is defined using a range of non-metric values, such as time and cost (Gatrell, 1996). Thus in a relative context, distance and location may be defined in a variety of ways depending on the relation that is used to define that particular space. In absolute space, Euclidean distance remains a fixed metric unit for determining distance and direction (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971). For example, in

absolute space the distance between two cities could be expressed in terms of the physical distance between the two places. However, the distance between these two points could also be expressed in relative space in terms of travel time. Although the two maps would be different from one another, each provides important information that can be used for different purposes (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971). In particular, defining space in relative terms was useful for positivist geographers who were eager to explain spatial patterns and behaviour. Human beings make choices based on a range of social, economic and psychological factors. Drawing on the previous example, human beings make decisions regarding travel, for example, not merely on the basis of the physical distance to their destinations, but also because of the time and cost that it takes to travel (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971). Thus Abler, Adam and Gould (1971) argue that human spatial behaviour is best understood in a relative spatial context, rather than by applying an absolute spatial understanding. In this example, analysing spatial behaviour in terms of time and cost is helpful in explaining human mobility patterns (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971).

An absolute and a relative understanding of space conceive of space as physical, or as “a ‘container’ of human life” (Soja, 1989, 79). Space, in this view, is conceptualised as a vast, apolitical expanse upon which human activities play out (Bondi, 2005; Hubbard, 2005). Thinking of space in physical terms dominated social geography up to the late 1960s, at which point the application of positivism to social research began to face criticism for a number of reasons (Kitchen, 2006). Firstly, positivists were critiqued for their mechanistic view of humans. Critics pointed out that humans cannot be reduced to mere ‘units’ of study and are instead all different; unique in their morals, beliefs and preferences. Thus positivism, defined by concepts of reduction and absolute or universal truths, was incapable of dealing adequately with this diversity and uncertainty (Cloke et al., 1991). Human agency, free will and uniqueness, as well as the influence of political, economic and social structures on society, were not adequately accounted for within the ‘science of the social’ (Cloke, et al., 1991). Positivist geographers were also criticised for failing to address ethical issues in their research and for claiming to produce objective knowledge (Harvey, 1973; Cloke, et al., 1991). Indeed in many

instances the scientific method seemed wholly inappropriate to deal with social science issues and concerns.

In response to these criticisms, human geographers began thinking more critically about the relationship between society and space. As a result a variety of new philosophies and methodologies began to emerge. These new approaches can be grouped into two broad schools of thought, namely humanism and structuralism (Kitchen, 2006). The contribution of these two schools of thought to spatial theory is discussed briefly in the following section. Although a wide variety of theory has been produced within each school, for the purpose of this thesis it is necessary to only provide a brief overview of the humanist and structuralist contribution to spatial theory.

2.2.2 Socially constructed space

During the 1970s, structuralist and humanist geographers began reconceptualising the concepts of space and place respectively (Mitchell, 2000). In reconceptualising space, both schools of thought moved away from a physical understanding of space, to an appreciation of space as a social product (Hubbard et al., 2002). Humanist geographers focused on theorising particular notions of place (Tuan, 1996; Cresswell, 2004, 2005; Entriken and Tepple, 2006). Research in this school explored how places are experienced and the meanings that people ascribe to places, such as neighbourhoods or the nation state. In South Africa, for example, studies such as Hart and Pirie's (1984, 38) research on Sophiatown, reveal the 'subjective dimension' of place. In their study the authors capture the identity and sense of place experienced by the local residents of the South African slum. For humanist geographers, places are more than physical spaces, instead they understood to have meaning and identity (Tuan, 1996; Cresswell, 2004, 2005; Entrikin and Tepple, 2006).

Structuralist geographers, on the other hand, employed structuralist philosophy to theorise the spatial relations of capitalist society. Drawing from Marxist literature, structuralist geographers have used the concept of socially produced space to explore capitalism and its spatial expressions. In this respect, structuralist geographers have

explored the links between the capitalist mode of production and the political organisation of space (Harvey, 1973, 1996a, 1996b; Mitchell, 2004). The critique of positivism, and the emergence of the 'hermenutic' and 'structuralist' philosophies, was evidence of a more relational, dialectical conceptualisation of space. The concept of relational space emerged, therefore, as a way of theorising space that considers space as a social construct. The following section discusses the concept of relational space in greater detail by drawing on the work of Doreen Massey (1994, 2004, 2005a).

2.2.3 Relational space

The concept of relational space involves reconceptualising space as a product of social relations (Massey, 1994, 2004, 2005a). This concept of space falls within the broader social constructivist paradigm (Mottier, 2005). Adopting this perspective blurs the boundaries between space and place, and opens up new ways of thinking about both concepts. Massey (1994, 2004, 2005a) argues that it is useful to reconceptualise space as a product of social relations. Social relations are multiple and diverse. People, in their everyday lives, forge economic, political and cultural connections and relationships. Moreover, these connections are established at a variety of spatial scales, from the global to the household level. A relational understanding of space views space as constituted out of these social interrelations (Massey, 1994, 2004, 2005a). As Massey (1994, 2) puts it, "the spatial is social relations 'stretched out'".

In order to conceptualise space in relational terms, it is important to consider the nature of the social relations that constitute space. As mentioned above, social relations are by nature dynamic and diverse. The possibility of making social connections and relationships is endless. If space is constituted out of these multiple relations, then space must also be diverse and dynamic, always in the process of becoming (Massey, 1994, 2004, 2005a). Massey (1994, 3) also draws attention to the meaning, symbolism and power that pervade all aspects of social relations, and thus of space as well: "since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of space is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification". A relational understanding of space thus draws attention to the social trajectories that make up social space (Bondi, 2005). Thinking of space in this way is

contrary to previous spatial understandings, which have either consciously or unconsciously perceived space to be static and politically neutral (Massey, 1994). A relational understanding of space also has implications for notions of place and place identities.

Traditionally place and space have been conceived of as binary opposites, each with a set of defining features (Bondi, 2005; Hubbard, 2005). Place is conventionally perceived to be grounded and fixed, as a bounded site with a distinguishable identity (Massey, 1994). Space, on the other hand, is conceptualised as infinite, neutral and objective, the “abstract outside” (Massey, 2004, 9). Thinking about space relationally has implications for how both space and place are reconceptualised. This is because a relational understanding of space appreciates that space is constituted through social relations that stretch beyond the boundaries of places. Indeed, a relational understanding undermines the space/place binary and thus challenges how both concepts are conventionally perceived.

Social theorists have highlighted how identities are constructed and reproduced relationally using a binary logic (McDowell, 1999; Sharp, 2004). Binary thinking dominates western thought and is highly influential in creating and maintaining meaning and power. In a conceptual binary, two oppositions are identified and set against each other. One opposition is typically privileged, containing the positive attributes that the ‘Other’ is said to be lacking (McDowell, 1999; Cloke and Johnston, 2005). Thus, in their construction, social identities are produced relationally in that they rely on, and are simultaneously limited by, the “Other” (McDowell, 1999; Martin, 2005).

Place identities have been constructed in a similar manner. Places, such as the home for example, rely on notions of the ‘Other’ on the outside of their boundaries for their meaning (Massey, 1994, 2004). In the case of this example, the home in the private realm is commonly conceptualised in relation to work in the public sphere. A relational understanding of space, however, focuses on the multiple social relations that intersect to produce a particular place. These dynamic social, economic, political, and cultural trajectories stretch far beyond the boundaries of individual places (Massey, 1994). Thus

a relational understanding makes it difficult to hold onto the notion of fixed place identities. Places instead have multiple and contradictory identities, which have to be negotiated at the various intersections (Massey, 1994, 2004; Hubbard et al., 2002). To illustrate this argument, Massey (2004) applies a relational understanding to think about the city of London in terms of its relational production. Massey (2004, 6) describes how London has been produced, and continues to be produced and sustained, through a number of social relations that stretch beyond its physical borders, whereby the city is a “product of relations which spread out way beyond it”. The identity of London as a place in the world is also produced and negotiated through these intersecting social trajectories. Thinking about cities such as London in this way allows for an appreciation of the multiple and complex identities of particular places.

Given a relational understanding of space, places are more adequately conceptualised as particular nodes within a broader network of social exchanges and interactions (Massey, 1994, 2004). Places are thus best thought of as ‘meeting places’, or points of intersection in the web of social interrelations that constitute space (Massey, 2004, 6). In this view places are porous, unbounded, and constituted and reconstituted through dynamic, intersecting social processes (Massey, 1994, 2004; McDowell, 1999, Hubbard et al., 2002; Entrikin and Tepple, 2006).

However, places are sites of localised experience that are shared in many ways by communities, or groups of people. Places are unique to individuals. Keeping in mind the notion of places as boundless, intersecting nodes within the web of social interconnections, the uniqueness of places is best understood in terms of the position of a place within this social web (Massey, 2004). Thus the uniqueness of places should not be understood in terms of the imagined boundaries that are imposed onto space, but rather in terms of understanding the production of places as relational. As such, the uniqueness of places can be understood as the, “specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that ‘beyond’” (Massey, 1994, 5). The following section explores the dialectical relationship between society and space, which is an important relational concept used in feminist geography theory.

2.2.4 Socio-spatial relations

The writing of Henri Lefebvre is highly influential in terms of theorising the dialectical relationship between society and space. Lefebvre was a French intellectual and philosopher who wrote within the Marxist tradition (Peet, 1998). The notion that society and space exist in a dialectic relationship was evident in his early writing. In his book, *La Révolution Urbaine*, Lefebvre argues that “space and the political organization of space express social relationships but also react back upon them” (Lefebvre, 1970, 25, in Soja, 1989, 81). In other words, Lefebvre is arguing that society and space exist in a mutually constitutive relationship.

This argument has been developed by different sub-disciplines within human geography. Urban geographers, for example, have used the concept of the socio-spatial dialectic to explore changing urban geographies. In this view cities are interpreted as spatial expressions of the societies that created them. How cities are organised reflects the socio-economic context and political ideology of the societies that live in those spaces (Smith, 2005). For example, social inequalities in society are mapped out onto space in the creation and existence of wealthy and poorer neighbourhoods. Whilst wealthier people can afford to live in pleasant environments with scenic views and good access to infrastructure and services, poorer communities are forced to live in marginal environments (Smith, 2005).

However, because of the dialectical relationship between space and society, space in turn acts back on society and shapes social relations. Space, for example, can reproduce social inequalities (Smith, 2005). As Smith (2005, 26) argues, “...space and place are not simple containers in which people’s social lives develop. Rather where people are placed has a direct bearing on those lives”. In other words, people who live in poorer, underserved areas will not have access to the same opportunities as those who can afford to live in wealthier areas. People who live in poorer, marginalised environments are also often exposed to greater risks. In highly polluted environments, or in areas with inadequate sanitation services, local people are more vulnerable to disease and health impediments than those who live in health environments (Smith, 2005). Thus space impacts on society in the sense that it reproduces social inequalities. Poorer people in

marginalised spaces are adversely affected by those spaces, which results in the continuation of their poverty and thus social inequality is reproduced.

Human geographers have also explored the ways in which space shapes and reproduces social identities (Smith, 2005). As mentioned previously, spaces and places are imbued with meanings. These meanings are socially constructed yet they shape how society perceives and interacts with particular spaces. Places have identities, and people identify with particular places so that those spaces are seen to have a bearing on how individuals construct their sense of self (Smith, 2005). Theorists draw attention to the links between the socially constructed identity of place and socially constructed identities of people living in that place. In this way spaces can impact on how people construct a sense of self- worth and identity. Feminist geographers have applied this understanding to examine the relationship between socially constructed concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ and the construction of gendered identities. The following section introduces the feminist geography sub-discipline.

2.3 Feminist geography

“The specific aim of feminist geography, therefore, is to investigate, make visible and challenge the relationships between gender divisions and spatial divisions, to uncover their mutual constitution and problematize their apparent naturalness. Thus the purpose here is to examine the extent to which women and men experience spaces and places differently and to show how these differences themselves are part of the social constitution of gender as well as that of place” (McDowell, 1999, 12).

The above quote from Linda McDowell succinctly sums up the aim of feminist geography. This section provides a brief overview of the sub-discipline. Feminist geography first emerged in western academia in the mid 1970s, but it was only the 1980s that feminist geographers began to be taken seriously within human geography circles (McDowell, 1993a). Like other feminist disciplines, feminist geography is a critical discourse that is interested in exploring gender and gender relations. The sub-discipline is also political, and feminist geographers share a common commitment with

other feminist scholars to challenge male patriarchy and improve women's lives in society (Dixon and Jones III, 2006). As a geographical sub-discipline, feminist geographers are interested in exploring gender and gender relations from a spatial perspective (Dixon and Jones III, 2006). Over the years feminist geographers have continuously shifted their theoretical focus, and have conceptualised the relationship between space and gender differently (McDowell, 1993a; Peet, 1998; Sharp, 2004).

In her book, *Feminism and Geography*, Gillian Rose (1993) charts the history of feminist thought within the discipline of human geography. Rose (1993, 5) points out that historically, the discipline has adopted a 'masculinist' perspective, whereby white, heterosexual men have dominated the production of geographical knowledge. The knowledge that was produced claimed to be exhaustive, but effectively excluded the voices and subjectivities of women. Up until the 1980s, academic work produced by female geographers, or work which centred on the experiences and subjectivities of women, was strongly resisted within the discipline (Rose, 1993). Early feminist geographers were particularly critical of the male-centred epistemology that dominated academic geography, and the way in which spatial thinking was influenced by the discipline's masculinist approach (Rose, 1993; Dixon and Jones III, 2006).

Early feminist geographers in the late 1970s began to criticise the spatial theory produced by structuralist and humanist geographers. In this respect, feminist geographers argued that the discipline failed to acknowledge the engendered binary logic that governs western spatial thinking (Rose, 1993; Johnston, 2005). To support their arguments, feminist geographers have linked the male/female binary to a number of associated spatial dualisms, such as the place/space, local/global and private/public binaries. Public space is associated with the global, masculine side of the opposition, whereas the private place of home is typically perceived as feminine and localised (Bondi, 2005; Pratt, 2005). Feminist geographers have argued that conceptualising space in this way has had, and continues to have, material consequences for women in society (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994). The following section discusses some of the implications of the engendered private/public binary.

2.4 The public/private binary

Feminist geographers have long theorised the public/ private dualism (Mitchell, 2000). In western societies, the physical separation of home and work can be traced back to the industrial revolution and the beginning of the capitalist economic system (Domosh and Seager, 2001). Feminist geographers influenced by Marxist theory have contributed a great deal to theorising the public/private dualism, in relation to the capitalist mode of production. These scholars draw attention to the ways in which capitalism and patriarchy are mutually reinforcing, and how both systems of social relations support the physical and ideological separation of the spaces of production and reproduction (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). In particular, these scholars focused on the spatial division of labour in the context of paid and domestic work, and the material consequences of this for women in society (McDowell, 1993a; Peet, 1998; Dixon and Jones III, 2006). Feminist geographers have argued that women's unpaid labour in the private sphere was critical to the survival of the capitalist system. At home, women were able to raise children, effectively reproducing the labour needed to sustain the capitalist mode of production (McDowell, 1999). In the private sphere, women were also able to support their husbands, the workers, by tending to their physical, sexual and psychological needs (McDowell, 1999; Mitchell, 2000; Domosh and Seager, 2001). The system of patriarchy also benefited by keeping women at home in the private sphere. By restricting the mobility of women, men were able to secure their position of power and control over the lives and identities of their female counterparts (McDowell, 1999). Thus whilst men travelled into the cities to work for a wage, women typically stayed at home to tend to their families and the domestic chores.

The gender relations that defined public and private spaces served to naturalise 'home' and 'work' as embodying feminine and masculine characteristic respectively (Domosh and Seager, 2001; Johnston, 2005). Whilst home was understood to be the natural place for women, the public sphere was accepted as the realm of men (Domosh and Seager, 2001). It is important to note, however, that throughout this early capitalist period many women did in fact work outside of the home. Women in the middle and poorer classes worked as domestic workers or in even factories during the industrial revolution

(McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Despite the working realities of women in the poorer groups in society, the separation and engendering of public and private space became entrenched on an ideological level (McDowell, 1999).

Feminist literature reveals that in contemporary times, this ideology continues to shape society's perceptions of 'home' and 'work'. Notions of home and domestic space are still linked to popular definitions of womanhood and femininity (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). In this respect, feminist geographers have drawn attention to the perceived feminine qualities stereotypically associated with the home. In literature, art and the media the home space is often portrayed as a safe haven of familial love, emotion and support (McDowell, 1999; Mitchell, 2000; Domosh and Seager, 2001). The home is positioned as the site of spiritual values and moral stability, and it is the woman's duty to maintain the home and all that it symbolises (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Work, in the public sphere, is constructed as the conceptual opposite. Whereas 'home' is the place of passivity and domestic bliss, 'work' is the space of action where men engage with ideas, prove their worth and are economically productive (Domosh and Seager, 2001).

The notion that 'a woman's place is in the home' has been enforced in a number of ways. Urban planning, for example, often discourages women with children to move around public spaces by making it difficult to do so (Domosh and Seager, 2001). Many women also fear public spaces and their movement in urban areas is restricted by fear of sexual violence (Pain, 1997). In some instances men control the movement of their wives and daughters more forcibly by using violence to prevent women from leaving their homes (Domosh and Seager, 2001). Finally, in some countries the mobility of women in public areas is restricted by law. In countries such as Libya and Iran, for example, women require permission from their husbands or fathers to travel out of the country (Domosh and Seager, 2001).

It is important to stress that notions of 'home' and 'work', in public and private space, are socially constructed. Much feminist geography research aims to expose the socially constructed nature of these concepts, and to subvert the apparent naturalness of 'home'

as a feminine space and ‘work’ as a masculine space (McDowell, 1999). To reinforce their arguments, feminist geographers highlight the multitude of ways in which the public and private spheres have been constructed by different individuals over time (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Home, for example, is not always constructed as a nostalgic space. Instead, for many women, home is a space of oppression, boredom and abuse (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Men also conceptualise ‘home’ in a variety of ways that challenge romanticised notions of home. For many men the home is not a haven or place of peace. Instead the home may be constructed as a place of tension or conflict, depending on the social relationships that characterise that space (McDowell, 1999). Contrary to the romantic associations of home, for most women their domestic space is also a place of hard work. Domestic chores can be difficult and unrewarding as they do not generate an income, and are often not acknowledged as work. Because notions of ‘home’ and ‘work’ are socially constructed they are dynamic and subject to change as both men and women challenge their engendered nature (McDowell, 1999).

Concepts of public and private space may be social constructs, but their conceptual and material significance in social life must not be underestimated. Not only do engendered spatial concepts translate into material consequences for women, but there are also conceptual implications. The following section explores the links between notions of space and place and the construction of gendered identities.

2.5 Space and gendered identities

Feminist geographers argue that space, place and gender are conceptually interrelated and mutually constitutive. In other words, gender and gendered identities both produce and are produced through “spatial configurations” (Mitchell, 2000, 201). For the purpose of this study it is useful to discuss the construction of gendered identities in relation to paid and domestic work in the public and private spheres.

Traditionally confined to domestic activities at home, women drew from the private realm to construct their feminine identities (Massey, 1994; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Undertaking domestic chores and tending to the family, women identified primarily with their roles as homemakers and caregivers. As Massey (1994, 179) argues, “the attempt to confine women to the domestic sphere was both specifically a spatial control and, through that, a control on identity”. Although many women nowadays undertake their domestic chores and work for a wage in the public sphere, Massey (1994) argues that the identities of women and the home continue to be intimately connected. Women, therefore, tend to associate themselves with their homes (Domosh and Seager, 2001). The cleanliness and attractiveness of their homes is seen as a reflection of themselves, their status and identity. Women take great pride in decorating their homes and keeping their households in order (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Women effectively define themselves in relation to their domestic activities and interactions (Domosh and Seager, 2001).

However, in contemporary times new economic systems have resulted in many women all around the world entering the public realm of paid employment. Because of the mutually constitutive relationship between spaces and gendered identities, the movement of women into the public realm has challenged conventional gender roles and relations (McDowell and Massey, 1996). In this respect, there is a growing literature on space, gender and work in South Africa, and internationally, as more women have entered the public realm as paid labourers. Women’s movement beyond the domestic realm into the public sphere has conceptually blurred the binaries of public/private and space/place, and has consequently challenged traditional masculine and feminine identities (Massey, 1995; McDowell, 1997, 2004; Bondi and Christie, 2003).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the theoretical framework applied in this study. This project adopts a feminist geography approach, and the literature review draws from

contemporary feminist geographers writing on space, gender and work. The concepts of space and gender are crucial to this study, and how both concepts are conceptualised has implications for how the research question is addressed. Feminist geographers are at the forefront of theorising space and gender and their arguments have been highly influential in this regard. In order to understand the feminist contribution to spatial thinking, it is important to trace more broadly how space has been conceptualised within the discipline of geography. Once this understanding is in place, the chapter turns to explore the links between space, place and gender in greater detail.

The chapter begins by briefly outlining the ways in which space has been theorised by human geographers since the 1950/60s. During the quantitative revolution, academic geographers adopted a physical understanding of space. In this period physical space was conceptualised in absolute and relative terms (Abler, Adams and Gould, 1971; Gatrell, 1996; Peet, 1998). In the 1970s, however, this positivist view of space received substantial criticism. In response, humanist and structuralist geographers began retheorising spatial concepts (Hubbard, 2005). Unlike previous concepts of space, these geographers adopted a perspective whereby space is conceptualised as a social product. Section 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 discuss Massey's theory of relational space and the socio-spatial dialectic respectively. Both these theories appreciate space as socially constituted.

Section 2.3 introduces the feminist geography sub-discipline. This section focuses on describing the engendered binary logic that dominates western spatial thinking. Because this study is interested in the working experiences of female street traders, the public/private binary is at the centre of the discussion in Section 2.4. Feminist geographers have also highlighted the mutually constitutive relationship between gendered identities and concepts of space and place (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999). Section 2.5 explores the links between notions of space and place and the construction of gendered identities within the context of work in contemporary societies. Whilst women have traditionally defined themselves in relation to their work in the private sphere, global changes in employment patterns have resulted in many women leaving home to find paid work. This movement from the private realm into the public sphere has necessitated new social relations that stretch across and connect both spaces. This in

turn has resulted in traditional notions of space and gender being challenged (McDowell and Massey, 1996; Bondi and Christie, 2003; McDowell, 2004; Pratt, 2005).

The understanding of space and gender as mutually constitutive forms the basis of the theoretical framework applied to interpret the research data in this study. The following chapter introduces the study context and provides an overview of street trading in the eThekweni Municipality, South Africa.

Chapter Three

Context

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the work experiences of female street traders in Hill Street, Durban. Street trading is an important sector in the informal economy that provides employment to millions of impoverished women in the country (Lund, 1998). Research has shown that a large number of female street traders are the sole breadwinners in their households. In many instances these women have been forced to enter the labour market in order to generate an income to support their extended families (Lund et al., 2000). Street traders generally work long hours under difficult conditions and the income that is generated is limited (Lund et al., 2000). In addition to the stress of managing their own businesses, female traders are also tasked with running their households and taking care of their families.

Section 3.2 begins by describing the post-apartheid government's macro-economic policy shift to the neoliberal GEAR strategy. Despite the achievements of the GEAR policy, critics have argued that it has done little to generate sufficient job opportunities to meet the needs of the South African population (Bond, 2000). Widespread poverty and unemployment remain critical problems confronting the South African government. Because of the lack of employment opportunities in the formal economy, millions of South Africans enter the informal economy to generate an income (Banerjee et al., 2006). Section 3.3 briefly describes the socio-economic context of South Africa, highlighting the problems experienced by the poorest groups in society. Understanding the broader socio-economic and political context of the country is important in order to contextualise the significance of the growing informal economy, wherein street traders earn an income.

Section 3.4 discusses the South African informal economy in detail, focusing on the working conditions of those employed informally. According to the 2007 Labour Force Survey (LFS), the informal economy employs 16.9% of the total working population in

the country (Statistics South Africa, 2007a). Informal workers generally work in difficult conditions and generate a limited income from their businesses (Devey, 2003). Section 3.5 critically assesses national policy designed to develop the informal economy and meet the needs of informal workers. Critics have argued that government has done little to support the most vulnerable informal workers employed in survivalist enterprises (Skinner, 2000; Rogerson, 2004; Devey et al., 2007). Street traders form part of the survivalist category and are thus marginalised in terms of government policy initiatives and support. Discussing different aspects of the informal economy in South Africa is important because street traders are informal workers. Thus this discussion helps create an understanding of the nature and conditions of work in the informal economy, as well as the impacts of relevant policy on the street trading sector.

Section 3.6 provides a brief introduction of the socio-economic context in the eThekweni Municipality, wherein the Hill Street study area is located. This section discusses the high unemployment rate in the Municipal region, which has resulted in many local people entering the informal economy in order to survive. Section 3.7 focuses specifically on the street trading sector in Durban. In this section, the characteristics of street traders are explored and their working conditions are described. This discussion is necessary in order to appreciate how female street traders experience and feel about their work, both at home and in the informal economy. The everyday working realities of street traders in Durban are also shaped by local government policy and support initiatives. Sections 3.7.2 and 3.7.3 outline how the local government in Durban has responded to the informal economy since the apartheid period. The focus of Section 3.7.2 is on the 2001 Informal Economy Policy that was created by the eThekweni Municipality in order to develop the local informal economy (Skinner, 2000). The policy is outlined and its impact on street trading in Durban is examined. Finally, Section 3.8 describes the Hill Street study area which is located within the Pinetown CBD area. In this section the working environment of the participants in this study is described. This discussion is useful in order to contextualise the experiences of female street traders operating in the local area.

3.2 Post-apartheid policy reform: from the RDP to the GEAR policy

In April 1994 the African National Congress (ANC) won the first democratic election held in South Africa. The challenges facing the newly elected government were immense. The apartheid regime had produced a segregated and highly unequal society, where race determined the potential life chances of individuals in the country (Peet, 2002). In order to redress the socio-economic imbalances in South Africa, the new government launched the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP was conceptualised by policy-makers as a holistic socio-economic strategy. The policy's strong pro-poor component reflected the ANC's commitment to redressing past inequalities and improving the quality of life of the poorest groups of society (Peet, 2002). The policy experienced some success and considerable progress was made in providing basic services to many previously disadvantaged communities (Cheru, 2001). Despite the success of policy initiatives, the programme was abandoned after only two years. In June 1996, the government introduced the GEAR strategy as South Africa's revised macro-economic policy (Cheru, 2001).

A combination of political and economic factors contributed to this shift in government policy approach. After the 1994 election, many foreign and local investors became concerned about South Africa's political and economic future. As a result there was a massive withdrawal of capital from the country and new investment was slow. Without sufficient investment, funding the RDP social welfare initiatives started to become a problem for national government (Habib and Padayachee, 2000). Competition for investment was fierce, and the state soon realised that they would have to find a way to renew investors' confidence and improve the country's global competitiveness. Neoliberalism was the dominant economic approach globally, and it offered the South African government an alternative approach to boost growth and attract investment (Habib and Padayachee, 2000). After the 1994 election, both local corporations and global financial institutions put increasing pressure on the government to restructure the economy in line with global trends. These issues caused much debate in the country, and in 1996 the state made the decision to officially adopt the GEAR strategy as the new macro-economic policy for South Africa (Habib and Padayachee, 2000).

The neoliberal approach of the GEAR policy differed significantly from the objectives and approach of the RDP. The GEAR strategy shifted national policy focus to growing the economy and attracting direct investment. Consequently, the South African economy underwent a massive structural transformation; state spending was restricted, the country's markets were deregulated, and the government encouraged the privatisation of state assets (Habib and Padayachee, 2000). Despite the neoliberal focus of the GEAR strategy, it emphasised its continued commitment to the RDP objectives of social and economic redress. The GEAR policy was positioned by the post-apartheid government as being a crucial component in the national anti-poverty campaign. It was argued by the state that increased economic growth was necessary in order to fund poverty alleviation and developmental initiatives and would alleviate poverty through a 'trickle down' mechanism (Cheru, 2001).

Since the implementation of the GEAR policy, the government has drawn attention to its economic achievements. The policy has been successful in lowering the national budget deficit and in attracting investment into the country (Habib and Padayachee, 2000). However, it is important to remain critical of these achievements. Critics of the GEAR strategy have argued that the distribution of the created wealth is highly skewed, and that the strategy has consequently increased the socio-economic inequality in the country (Bond, 2000). The following section focuses more closely on the impact of the GEAR policy on poverty and unemployment in South Africa.

3.3 Poverty and unemployment in South Africa

The implementation of the GEAR policy promised to bring economic growth and employment opportunities to South Africa. However, unemployment and poverty levels have not decreased significantly since the implementation of the policy (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001). Critics have argued that the government's aggressive market-led approach is inappropriate to address the needs of the poor in the country. It has been argued that the state has prioritised economic growth strategies at the expense of

poverty alleviation and social development initiatives (Cheru, 2001). Furthermore, critics have also argued that the GEAR strategy has restricted state spending, which has impacted negatively on national social welfare programmes (Lund et al., 2000).

The government has, however, had some success in providing basic services to marginalised communities (van der Berg, 2006). According to the July 2006 General Household Survey (GHS), the percentage of households using electricity for lighting rose from 75.6% in 2002 to 81.3% in 2006. During this same period the percentage of households which have piped water in their dwellings, or on their sites, rose from 66.1% to 71.3% (Statistics South Africa, 2007b). The government's response to health and education has not been as impressive. Although the government has focused on reallocating state funds to meet the needs of the poor, the redistribution of resources has not necessarily translated into positive social outcomes for the targeted groups (van der Berg, 2006). With regard to education in particular, van der Berg (2006) argues that the restructuring of national budgets has not improved the quality of education provided at many previously disadvantaged schools. HIV/AIDS is another problem which needs desperate attention in the country. According to the national 2007 mid-year population estimates, approximately 5.3% of the population is HIV positive (Statistics South Africa, 2007c). Government has worked hard to raise awareness of the disease and to provide treatment for infected persons, however, much more is needed to curb the spread and effects of the epidemic (van der Berg, 2006).

The country's high unemployment rate is one of the most critical challenges confronting the present government. Since the democratic transition there has been a significant increase in the number of unemployed people in the country (Bond, 2000). According to the March 2007 LFS, the unemployment rate reached 25.5% in 2007. Although the survey shows that the unemployment rate has declined in recent years, the decrease has been marginal (Statistics South Africa, 2007a). The survey revealed that black South Africans constitute the highest percentage of unemployed people in the country (30.2%). The unemployment rates for the coloured, Indian/Asian and white populations are 19.8%, 13.8% and 4.3% respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2007a). From the survey results it is also evident that unemployment is most prevalent amongst

black, South African women, whereby 36.4% of black, South African women are unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2007a).

Researchers have argued that the structural adjustment initiatives of the GEAR strategy have played an important role in stifling job creation. By the end of 1998, the GEAR policy had promised to create 650 000 new jobs. However, 300 000 jobs were actually lost between 1996 and 1998 (Cheru, 2001). The implementation of the GEAR strategy caused changes in the South African business environment. As the national privatisation drive intensified, many state companies were sold off. In this process a large numbers of workers were retrenched through restructuring and downsizing efforts (Banerjee et al., 2006). By liberating and deregulating the country's markets, South African goods came under new pressure from international competition. This pressure caused many more local companies to downsize their operations in order to compete globally. Consequently a significant number of jobs have been lost, particularly in the mining and manufacturing sectors, which have traditionally employed a large percentage of the South African labour force (Valodia, 2001). Whilst the contribution of the mining and manufacturing sectors to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has declined, the service and communication sectors in South Africa are growing in importance. Employers in the latter sectors favour individuals with marketable skills and expertise. This limits the job opportunities available to many unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the country (Carmody, 2002).

As a result employment in the informal economy provides an alternative for many South Africans who are eager to earn an income (Banerjee et al, 2006). A large number of the informal workers in the country are semi-skilled and unskilled black, South African women. Impoverished and unable to find formal employment, many of these women enter the informal economy to support their families (Lund et al., 2000). Understanding the macro-economic policy context in South Africa is important in order to contextualise the country's growing informal economy, wherein female street traders earn a living. The following section discusses the size, growth and characteristics of the informal economy in South Africa in greater detail.

3.4 The South African informal economy: definitions, size and characteristics

How to define both the informal economy and informal workers has been debated and contested all over the world (Devey et al., 2006). In South Africa, national surveys classify informal businesses using an international ‘enterprise-based’ definition. This definition was first developed at the 15th International Conference of Labour Statistics (ICLS) in 1993 (Devey et al., 2003; Devey et al., 2006; Skinner, 2006). Using the ‘enterprise-based’ definition, informal workers are classified according to the nature of the enterprise in which they are employed. Informal enterprises are defined as small businesses that employ few people and that are not registered legally with the state (Devey et al., 2003; Devey et al., 2006; Skinner, 2006; Rogerson, 2007). Informal businesses do not pay value added tax (VAT) and informal employees are not covered by national labour legalisation. Informal workers therefore do not have access to the security and welfare benefits associated with formal employment, such as pension plans and medical aid schemes (Devey et al., 2003; Devey et al., 2006).

According to the March 2007 LFS, the informal economy in South Africa currently employs 2 131 000 people, which amounts to 16.9% of the total employed population in the country (Statistics South Africa, 2007a). There are currently more men employed in the informal economy than women. The March 2007 LFS shows that black South African men constitute the highest number of informal workers (1 282 000). Black South African women constitute the second highest population group employed informally (1 029 000) (Statistics South Africa, 2007a).

However, determining the exact size and growth of the informal economy is difficult. Whilst national statistics are commonly used in policy-making, many researchers have drawn attention to the gaps and inconsistencies of these estimates. It has been argued that the definition used to classify informal workers in these surveys is problematic, and this could have contributed to data being misinterpreted (Skinner, 2002; Devey et al., 2003). Researchers have also pointed out that the question format and sampling frame used in national surveys has changed over the years. These inconsistencies make it difficult to identify reliable trends in the growth of the informal economy over time

(Devey et al., 2003; Devey et al., 2006). Despite these difficulties, analyses of statistics from Statistics South Africa data indicate that the informal economy in South Africa is growing (Skinner, 2006; Rogerson, 2007). Not only is the number of informal workers growing, but the contribution of the informal economy to national GDP is increasing (Skinner, 2002, 2006). Although calculations vary, it has been estimated that the informal economy contributes between seven and twelve percent to the national GDP figure (Devey, et al., 2007).

Informal workers engage in a number of different activities to earn a living, such as street trading, construction, hairdressing, and muti trading, to name a few (Devey, 2003; Skinner 2006). Retail and wholesale trade, however, employ the majority of the informal workers in South Africa (Skinner, 2002; Devey et al., 2006). Research on the informal economy indicates that most informal workers are from the poorest groups in society (Lund and Skinner, 2004). Those employed in the informal economy generally work long hours for a limited, inconsistent income (Devey, 2003; Lund and Skinner, 2004). In the 2007 LFS 687 000 informal workers listed that they earned between R1 and R500 per month, and a further 593 000 workers listed that they earned between R500- R1000 per month (Statistics South Africa, 2007a).

Furthermore, the working conditions of informal workers are generally poor. In 2002 a study was conducted to measure the constraints to growth in the informal economy in Durban. The study surveyed five hundred and seven informal workers who engaged in a range of informal work activities (Skinner, 2005). In the survey, the respondents were asked about the problems that they faced in their work. The results revealed that the majority of informal workers considered low profits and business competition to be major problems (Skinner, 2005). Poor access to infrastructure and services also emerged as a significant issue, and the respondents cited the lack of proper sanitation and storage facilities as their most pressing concerns (Skinner, 2005). Crime also emerged as a critical issue, especially amongst shebeen owners, street traders and spaza shop owners. Fifty nine percent of the informal workers who listed crime and theft to be a major concern were women (Skinner, 2005). Finally, inadequate access to credit and support services emerged as a particular problem for informal workers (Skinner,

2005). Street traders confront many of these same issues in their trade in the informal economy. Understanding these issues is therefore important in order to contextualise the work experiences of female street traders in Durban. In this regard, it is also important to consider national policy which impacts on the lives of informal workers, including street traders. National government policy regarding the informal economy is discussed in the following section.

3.5 National government response to the informal economy

The government's Department of Trade and Industry (Dti) is responsible for managing the country's small, medium and micro enterprises. In 1995 the Dti introduced the White Paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Businesses. The aim of the policy was to create a more enabling business environment for small enterprises in South Africa (Lund, 1998; Rogerson, 2008, 2000). The document outlines and describes four types of enterprises that are covered by the policy, namely small, medium, micro and survivalist enterprises (SMMEs). Medium, small and micro businesses are defined according to the monetary worth of the assets of the particular enterprise, and according to the number of workers employed by the business. Survivalist enterprises are defined as businesses that earn a minimal amount of money, and that are managed by members of the population who are unable to find other employment (Rogerson, 2000; Devey et al., 2007). The majority of survivalist enterprise owners are impoverished women who generate a minimal amount of income from their businesses. Survivalist enterprises generally require limited capital and skills to become established (Rogerson, 2000).

In order to effectively implement the White Paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Businesses, the state has established a number of national organisations. Two of the biggest organisational bodies established are the Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency and Khula Enterprise Finance. The Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency was set up by government to provide SMMEs with

business support and training. Khula Enterprise Finance was established to assist SMMEs in obtaining credit (Rogerson, 2000; Skinner, 2000).

National government policy and initiatives with regard to the informal economy have faced substantial criticism. For example, within the White Paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Businesses each of the four enterprise groups are discussed and presented with different support and development strategies. Although the strategies for small, medium and micro enterprises are discussed in detail, survivalist enterprises are largely ignored within the policy document (Devey et al., 2007). The policy has also been criticised for failing to address the particular needs of female entrepreneurs. Although the document acknowledges that a large number of small enterprises are owned and managed by women, and it states its commitment to assisting women in their business ventures, concrete strategies to help address the concerns of female enterprise owners are missing from the policy. This is particularly evident with regard to the needs of women involved in survivalist business activities (Lund, 1998; Rogerson, 2008).

Similarly, research suggests that although the DTI support and training programmes have had some success in helping small and medium businesses, the policy initiatives have had little influence on those working in the survivalist category (Rogerson, 2000, 2004; Skinner 2000). In a survey that was conducted on local economic development in Johannesburg and Durban between 1999 and 2002, respondents in the informal economy were asked questions regarding whether they had accessed any of the available government support and credit services. The results revealed that the majority of informal enterprise owners had not received any assistance in the form of credit or support from government (Skinner, 2000). A large majority of the informal workers that were interviewed were unsure of the credit services that were available to them and how to go about accessing these services. The results also revealed that government training programmes are largely inaccessible to survivalist workers, many of whom are unable to take extended periods of time off work to attend training courses (Skinner, 2000).

South African scholars writing about the informal economy in the country have attributed this policy failure in part to the dualist perspective that the South African government has adopted regarding the country's economy (Skinner, 2006; Devey et al., 2007; Rogerson, 2007). In this perspective the informal economy is conceptualised and discussed as being separate from the formal economy. Contrary to government perceptions, the authors point to case study evidence that highlights the linkages and movement of goods and people between the two economies (Skinner, 2006; Devey et al., 2007; Rogerson, 2007). Similarly, Skinner (2002, 2006) argues that the boundaries between informal and formal work activities are blurred and that future policy initiatives should take into account the dynamic and complex ways in which the two economies are interconnected.

It is important to understand the policy context in South Africa with regard to the informal economy because these policy initiatives have a direct bearing on the lives of informal traders. Street trading is categorised as a survivalist sector within the informal economy and from the discussion it is evident that government support to this sector is limited. Whilst national policy may be lacking in terms of meeting the needs of informal workers, the eThekweni Municipality has made significant strides in developing policy to fill this gap (Skinner, 1999). The next section of this chapter briefly introduces the socio-economic context of the eThekweni Municipality, wherein the Hill Street study area is located. Section 3.7 discusses street trading within the Municipal area, focusing specifically on local policy designed to develop the informal economy and improve the working conditions of informal workers.

3.6 Durban's socio-economic context

The eThekweni Municipality is situated on the east coast of the KwaZulu-Natal province. The Municipality covers a 2297sq.km area, with boundaries that extend to Umkomaas in the South, Tongaat in the North and to Cato Ridge inland (eThekweni Municipality, 2007). The Municipality has a population of approximately three million people and it is the second most populated municipality in the country. Black South

Africans constitute the majority of the Municipality's population (68%), whilst the Indian/Asian, coloured and white populations constitute 20%, 3% and 9% of the total population respectively (eThekweni Municipality, 2007).

In 2000 the eThekweni Municipal boundaries were redrawn with the restructuring of municipalities in terms of the Municipal Structures Act (No.117 of 1998). The new municipal boundaries of the eThekweni Municipality were extended to incorporate large out-lying rural areas into the Municipality. The character and levels of development within the rural and urban areas vary considerably. In the urban areas there are well-serviced, affluent suburbs, commercial centres and manufacturing nodes. The rural areas, however, are under-developed and many of the local people have poor access to essential infrastructure and services (Nel et al., 2003). Large scale poverty exists within the Municipal region and the poverty levels are particularly high in the rural districts. The Municipality has managed to provide basic services to many impoverished communities. Service backlogs persist, however, and the gap between the wealthy and the poor continues to widen (Nel, et al., 2003).

Unemployment is one of the most pressing concerns facing the eThekweni Municipality. The eThekweni Municipal region is the third largest economic centre in South Africa. Despite the economic importance of the area, the Municipality has an unemployment rate of (34%) (eThekweni Municipality, 2007). The structural adjustment initiatives of GEAR are largely to blame for the high unemployment rate. As South Africa entered the global market, local markets came under pressure from foreign competition (Nel et al., 2003). In Durban, manufacturing has traditionally been the most important sector in terms of the region's GDP growth. This sector has been severely affected by competition from foreign imports and many jobs have been lost as companies restructure (Nel et al., 2003). In the face of high unemployment and poverty, the informal economy plays a vital role in providing jobs and sustaining the livelihoods of many impoverished people in Durban. Of the total working population in the Municipality, 80% are employed in the formal economy whilst approximately 15% are employed in the informal economy (eThekweni Municipality, 2007). The following section focuses specifically on street trading within the eThekweni Municipality. This

discussion is necessary to provide a sense of who street traders are, what types of work they engage in and what challenges they experience in their line of work.

3.7 Street trading in Durban

Street traders, and in particular female traders, are confronted with a range of challenges and obstacles in their everyday work. This section focuses on the work experiences of female street traders within the eThekweni Municipality. Section 3.7.2 and 3.7.3 discuss local government policy that impacts on the work experiences and working conditions of street traders within the Municipal region. Understanding local government's response to the informal economy is important because the policy initiatives shape the lives of female street traders within the Hill Street study area.

3.7.1 The everyday working realities of street traders in Durban

The last census to determine the number of street traders operating in the Durban area was conducted in 1997 by the Economic Development Department of the Durban Metropolitan Council. The census counted over 19 000 street traders, of which 57% were found to be operating in the inner city. A further 30% were located in high density non-urban areas, such as Umlazi (Lund, 1998). It is likely, however, that the number of street traders operating in the Municipal area would have increased substantially since this last census was conducted (Skinner, pers comm., 23 September 2008).

Street traders in Durban engage in a wide range of activities. Many traders sell food produce or manufactured goods, such as shoes and clothing. Other traders provide services to the public. Durban has a thriving muti market, for example, which is dominated by female traders who sell traditional medicine (Nesvåg, 2002). The majority of street traders in Durban are black South African women. There are, however, also many foreign African traders operating in the area (Lund et al., 2000). Street traders tend to work long hours and earn a minimal amount of money from their businesses. Street traders, or survivalist traders as they are sometimes referred to, are

from the poorest groups in society and the majority have received little formal education (Lund et al., 2000). In a survey on street trading, conducted by the Economic Development Department in 1997, 14.4% of female traders and 8.6% of male traders reported having no formal education. Despite these figures, the majority of male and female participants were able to read and write in their mother tongue (Lund, 1998). Furthermore, street traders generally work in difficult conditions. In the same survey, the participating traders were asked to list the main obstacles that they faced in growing their businesses (Lund, 1998). A lack of capital emerged as the most significant concern and just over 40% of both male and female participants listed access to capital as a major problem (Lund et al., 2000). Survivalist traders struggle to obtain loans from commercial banks or the private sector. Skinner (2000) points out that there are a few private sector organisations which can offer SMMEs financial support. Many of these organisations, such as the Land Bank, are inaccessible to survivalist traders. These organisations tend to have specific lending requirements which are unsuitable to many informal workers (Skinner, 2000). National SMME initiatives have largely failed to provide accessible credit services to individuals in the informal economy. Access to capital therefore remains a significant obstacle to developing the street trading sector (Skinner, 2000).

The lack of basic infrastructure and services is another serious concern amongst street traders. In the 1997 survey, 68% of the participants noted that they had no access to a toilet in their place of work (Lund, 1998). The participants also listed the lack of storage facilities, proper shelter facilities, and overnight accommodation as problems which made running their businesses difficult (Lund, 1998). The lack of overnight accommodation is a particular problem for traders who live in outlying rural areas within the Municipality. These traders are forced to commute long distances to and from work each day. Other traders migrate to the urban centres to trade and return home on a weekly or a monthly basis (Lund, 1998). Criminal violence and theft also emerged as important issues within the survey, with 41% of women and 33% of men listing crime as a significant obstacle. Female traders are especially vulnerable to crime in the workplace and in particular to gender based violence (Lund, 1998). Street traders generally lack effective union representation and this has implications for the ability of

the sector to mobilise around issues and voice their concerns. Although union organisations exist, research has shown that the membership in these organisations is generally low (Lund and Skinner, 1999). One of the biggest and most important informal trader unions in the eThekweni Municipality is the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU). SEWU was established in 1994 with the aim to give a voice to the specific needs and concerns of female informal workers (Nesvåg, 2002).

Research indicates that many female traders are the sole breadwinners in their households and have children and relatives that rely on the income that is earned (Lund et al., 2000). As both homemakers and providers, female traders are tasked with successfully co-ordinating their business and domestic duties on a daily basis. Female traders with young children are confronted with particular problems. Lund (1998) argues that the state has not provided adequate child care facilities to impoverished women in South Africa. The author argues that the government still has much to do in terms of providing pre-school and day-care facilities to the poorest groups in the country. Traders who do not have anyone to assist them, and cannot afford day care, are forced to bring their young children to work with them (Lund et al., 2000).

This section describes the general working environments of street traders in Durban. The difficulties experienced by female traders are emphasised. It has been shown that government policy also impacts significantly on the lives of street traders. The next section provides an important historical review of some of the national and local policy that has impacted on street trading in Durban.

3.7.2 A history of street trading policy in Durban

Street trading has a long history in the Durban area. For the first three decades of the twentieth century, street traders and hawkers were able to trade in the centre of Durban with little restriction (Nesvåg, 2002). From the 1940s, however, the state began to limit and tightly regulate street trading in urban areas. A number of national apartheid laws were passed which made it difficult for street traders to operate in South African cities (Nesvåg, 2002). The most oppressive piece of local legalisation regarding the sector was passed in Durban in 1962. This local by-law effectively prohibited street trading in

the city. Street traders that were operating in the local area were considered illegal and were subject to constant harassment from the police (Nesvåg, 2002). Controlling street trading in Durban proved difficult for the local authorities. The street traders were heavily dependant on their informal employment and thus they defied the harsh legislation and persisted with their trade. Tension between the traders and the local authority escalated (Nesvåg, 2002). In the 1980s the national government began to rethink its approach to the informal economy. On a national level, the government had begun to recognise the economic advantages in supporting the development of small businesses. The costs involved in policing the growing number of defiant street traders were also escalating and policy was largely unsuccessful. These factors contributed to the national government's change in policy approach and in 1991 the Business Act was passed by the state (Nesvåg, 2002). This Act limited the power of local government to restrict and manage the informal economy and as a result street trading began to flourish, particularly in the centres of South African cities (Nesvåg, 2002).

In Durban, local government was frustrated at the lack of control of the booming informal sector and worked hard to amend the 1991 Act (Nesvåg, 2002). In 1993 the Act was successfully amended and local government was given room to develop by-laws that could assist in the regulation and management of the informal economy (Nesvåg, 2002). In 1996 the local government in Durban implemented a new set of by-laws that limited street trading to demarcated areas in the city. These by-laws also outlined particular health standards that had to be adhered to and stipulated specific trading hours during which traders could conduct business (Nesvåg, 2002). Two years later, local government introduced a monthly permit fee for the demarcated sites. Traders were charged R10 per month for a site without any facilities and R35 per month for a site with a table and shelter (Nesvåg, 2002). The new by-laws were not received favourably by the local traders. Street traders and trader organisations protested against the new regulations, which they argued were unreasonable and unjust (Nesvåg, 2002). Many traders continued to disobey the by-laws and proceeded to trade illegally outside of the demarcated areas. In response, local government tightened up the implementation of the by-laws and numerous raids in street trading zones were

conducted. These raids were carried out by the police and illegally operating traders were fined and had their goods confiscated (Nesvåg, 2002).

Over the years, the eThekweni Municipality has continued with its attempts to improve the organisation of the informal economy. The effective management of street trading in the Municipality remains a challenge for government authorities. Many of the initiated programmes and regulations continue to be met with resistance from local street traders (Participant A, 6 June 2007). The conflict between the eThekweni Municipality and local street traders persists in the present situation and the past issues and events have contributed to the development of new local policy. The Informal Economy Policy, which was adopted in 2001, represents a renewed attempt to accommodate the needs of informal workers within the broader social and economic goals of the Municipality. The development of the new policy and its impact on street trading in Durban are discussed in the following section.

3.7.3 The 2001 Informal Economy Policy

In 1998 the White Paper on Local Government was gazetted. The document outlines the responsibility of local government to boost economic growth and development at the local level. A significant amount of power was devolved to local authorities to initiate projects which would meet these objectives (Nel, 2000). The eThekweni Municipality recognised the important role of the informal economy in creating employment opportunities and contributing to the economic output of the region. In 1999, Durban's North and South Central Local Councils (NSCLC) established a technical task team to put together ideas for an informal economy policy for the city (Skinner, 2000). Committed to local economic development, the team aimed to produce a policy which would help develop and support the informal economy (Skinner, 2000). It was also important to local government that the new policy set out strategies to improve the regulation and control of the informal sector. Informal workers continue to work in difficult conditions, with little or no access to basic services and support facilities. Thus it was imperative that the new policy set out steps to improve the working conditions of informal workers, and in particular, of women employed in the informal economy (Skinner, 2000). In the policy-making process the Municipality

consulted with a number of street trader organisations to get input from informal workers. The Municipality worked hard to increase the participation of all affected stakeholders in an effort to improve the relationship between traders and local government (Lund and Skinner, 2004). After two years of deliberation, the policy was finalised and adopted as a Unicity Policy for Durban (Lund and Skinner, 2004).

In line with the policy objectives, the eThekweni government has established a number of Business Support Units across the Municipal area. These organisations were set up to address the needs and concerns of local informal workers, and to provide advice and training to informal enterprise owners (eThekweni Municipality, 2001). The officials working in these organisations manage the allocation of trading sites in their districts and the issuing and payment of trading permits. In this way the Business Support Units play an important role in controlling and regulating street trading in the Municipality (eThekweni Municipality, 2001). The Business Support Units also strive to work closely with street traders and trader organisations. It is proposed that this will help promote a healthy dialogue between traders and local government. Through these organisations, local government encourages the participation of street traders in decision-making regarding the effective management of the local informal economy (eThekweni Municipality, 2001).

The policy also initiated an upgrade of the Warwick Junction trading area, which is located in the inner city. This upgrade was part of the Municipality's broader urban renewal project for the area. The project provides a good example of how the new policy has been translated into positive changes for informal traders (Lund and Skinner, 2004). It has been estimated that there were approximately 5000-8000 informal traders operating in Warwick Junction in 2004 (Lund and Skinner, 2004). The upgrade resulted in the provision of better infrastructure and services for the traders operating in the vicinity. For example, Lund and Skinner (2004) explain how child care facilities and affordable overnight accommodation initiatives were put in place to cater specifically for the needs of the female traders in the area.

Despite these positive developments, there is still a great deal of tension between the Municipal authority and street traders (see newspaper articles in Appendix 1 and 2 for example). Street traders remain unhappy with the lack of adequate services and space available in trading areas. Illegal traders continue to trade in spite of local by-laws that prohibit trading without a proper permit. The Municipality has attempted to enforce its regulations and has conducted a number of raids in formalised trading zones. During these raids illegal traders have had their goods confiscated and are liable to pay a fine to have their goods returned. On the 18 and 19 of June 2007, a violent protest took place outside the magistrate's court in the Durban city centre. The street traders mobilised themselves around their grievances. A number of street trader organisations put together a list of demands, which was forwarded to the head of the Durban Business Support Unit (Andrew et al., 2007). The traders complained about the lack of services and space available for trading. The protestors were particularly unhappy with the local government's use of the police force to harass illegal traders. The protest turned violent as the police used water canons and pepper spray to break up the angry crowds. Five hundred traders were later arrested by the police (Makhaye, 2007). The protests received a great deal of media attention in both local and national newspapers. Thus, although there have been some positive outcomes from the policy initiatives, the Municipality has a long way to go to develop the informal sector and to ensure that traders are able to work in healthy, safe environments. The final section in this chapter introduces the case study area in Pinetown, where the empirical research for this study was conducted.

3.8 The Hill Street study area

The participants in this study trade in the informal market in Hill Street, Pinetown. Pinetown is situated in the inner west region of the eThekweni Municipality and Hill Street is located in the Pinetown CBD area (see Figure 1 and 2). Informal trade has occurred in the Pinetown CBD for many years, and the sector continues to provide an important source of income for many local people who are unable to find employment in the formal economy (Participant A, 6 June 2007).

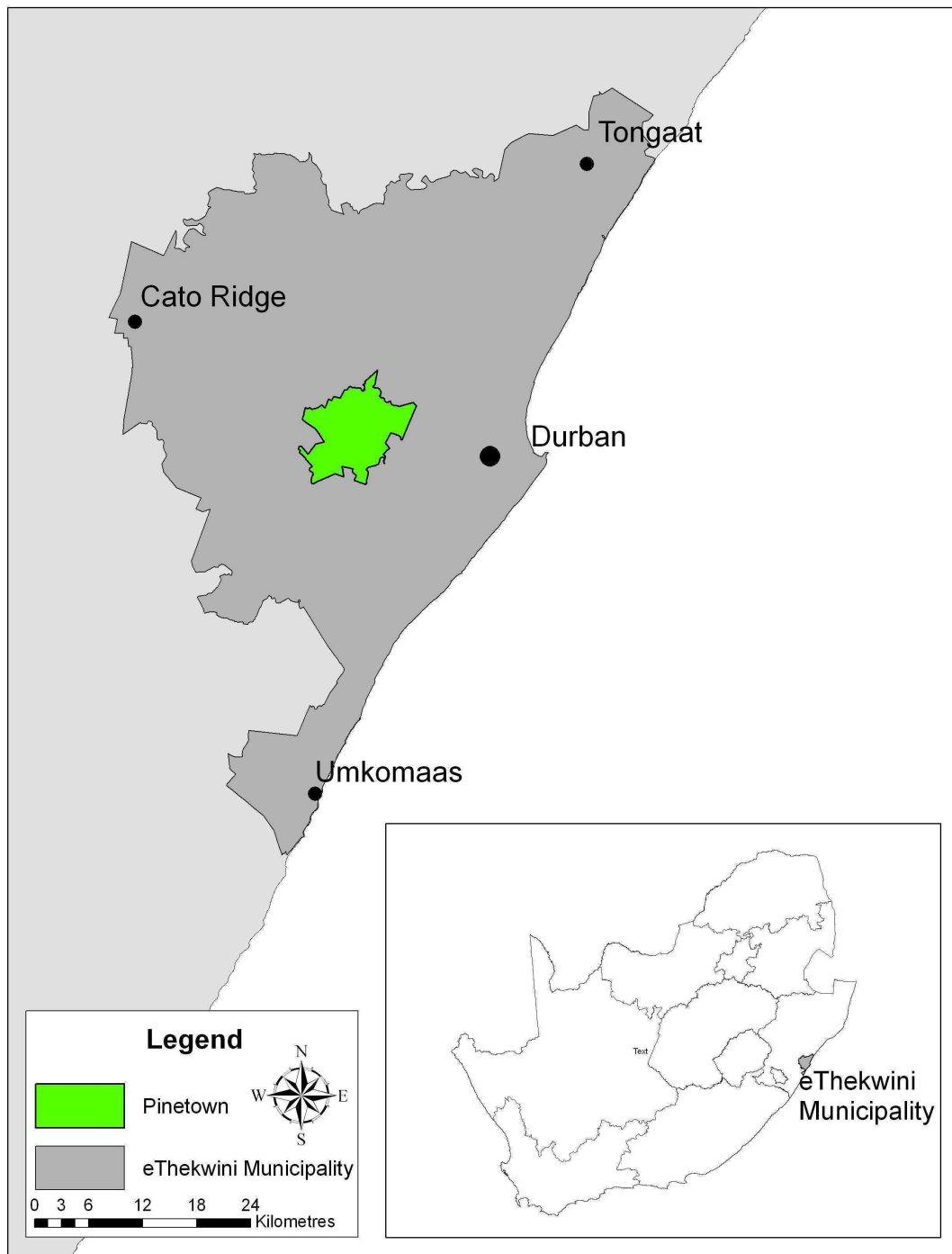


Figure 1: Map to show the location of Pinetown within the eThekweni Municipality.

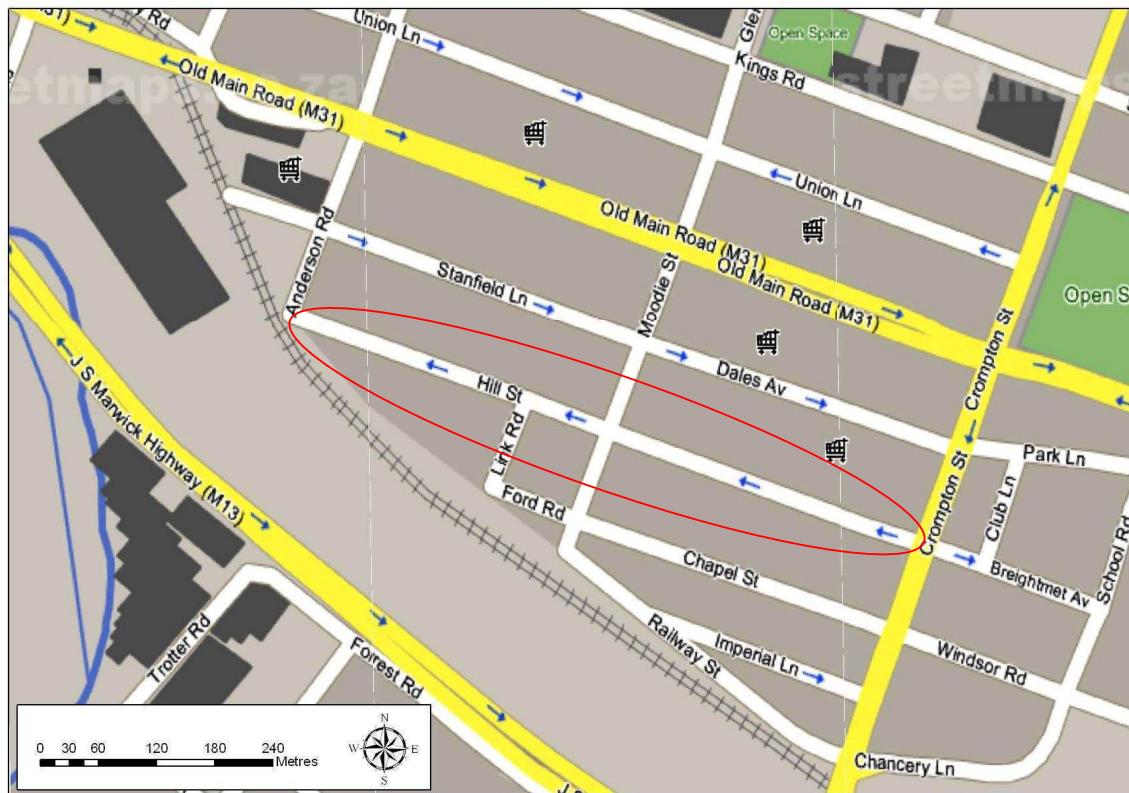


Figure 2: Map to show the Hill Street study area within the Pinetown CBD.

The majority of the traders in the area are black South African women who reside locally (see Figure 3). There are, however, a number of foreign African traders operating in the area from countries such as Senegal and Mozambique (Participant A, 6 June 2007). Traders sell a variety of goods, including fruit and vegetables, clothing, beauty products and electronic items.

The economic benefits of the informal trade in Pinetown are recognised by the local authority, and in 2003 the eThekweni Municipality began formalising the street trade that occurs in this region (eThekweni Municipality, 2003). There are currently 285 formal demarcated sites in the informal market, although many more illegal traders operate in the area (Participant A, 6 June 2007). In order to trade in Hill Street, potential traders are required to apply for a trading permit from the Municipality. Registered traders that have obtained permits are obliged to pay a monthly permit fee and abide by the Municipal regulations. After receiving a trading permit, traders are

allocated one of two types of trading sites. Demarcated sites that are equipped with a table and a shelter are charged at R49,90 per month, whilst sites without either a table or a shelter are charged at R17,10 per month (Participant A, 6 June 2007).

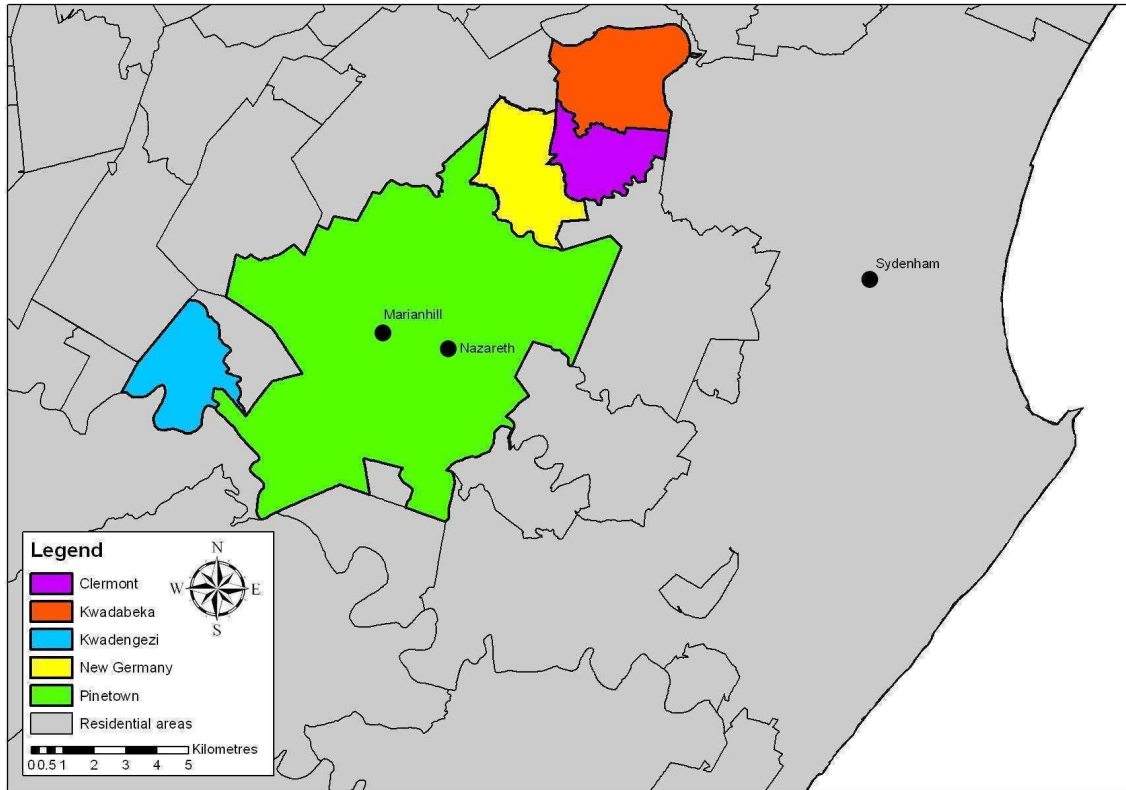


Figure 3: Map to show the areas where the research participants reside.

Over the years the eThekweni Municipality has attempted to manage the Hill Street informal market more efficiently. The area is congested and the infrastructure is unable to cope with the large numbers of legal and illegal informal traders operating in the vicinity (eThekweni Municipality, 2003). For example, the Municipality often receives complaints from local ratepayers and formal shop owners regarding the unpleasant aesthetics of the area (eThekweni Municipality, 2003). Illegal street trading is particularly difficult to manage (Participant A, 6 June 2007). Because the number of demarcated sites within the market area is limited, illegal traders operate in any small area that they can find (Participant A, 6 June 2007). Often illegal traders encroach onto pedestrian walkways, which is dangerous to the public who are then forced to walk in the road. The Municipality also has to deal with complaints from formal shop owners in

the area because illegal traders trade against their windows, blocking their displays (eThekweni Municipality, 2003). It was reported by Participant A (6 June 2007) that sanitation services in the area are also limited and waste removal is problematic given the large volumes of traders operating in the area.

In order to deal with these issues, the Municipality has initiated a number of projects and developments. In line with the 2001 Informal Economy Policy, the Municipality established a Business Support Unit in Pinetown to address the needs and problems experienced by traders and other stakeholders in the area. The Unit is responsible for managing the allocation and payment of trading site permits, as well as providing advice and support to the local traders (eThekweni Municipality, 2001). The Pinetown Unit works closely with the existing trader organisations and street committees, which represent the interests of the informal traders operating in the area (Participant A, 6 June 2007). The local government has also invested in upgrading the local area. In 2007 the Municipality invested R2.5 million into providing improved infrastructure and services in the vicinity. With this funding, the local government built twenty-eight formalised trading kiosks near the Pinetown taxi rank and new storage facilities for legal traders operating within the area (Dlamini and Mbokazi, 2007). The upgrade has helped improve the working conditions of the local street traders and the aesthetics of the area (Dlamini and Mbokazi, 2007). Despite these developments, the majority of the participants who were interviewed in this study remain dissatisfied with the poor working conditions in Hill Street, the high permit fees and the lack of space available for trading.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter aims to describe the relevant contextual issues that have a bearing on the work experiences of female street traders within the study area. In order to contextualise their experiences it is important to first describe the broader socio-economic and political circumstances in South Africa. In 1996 the South African government adopted the GEAR strategy as the new macro-economic policy for the

country. Despite the promise of the GEAR policy, unemployment and poverty remain critical problems in post-apartheid South Africa. Critics of the GEAR policy argue that the strategy has contributed significantly to stifling job creation in the formal economy, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled workers (Bond, 2000). As a result, the informal economy provides an important source of income for millions of impoverished South Africans.

In Section 3.3 the socio-economic context of South Africa is discussed in greater detail, and in Section 3.4 the size and characteristics of the informal economy are described. Research has shown that informal workers are generally from the marginalised groups in society. Impoverished and with little or no formal education, many poorer South Africans enter the informal economy to earn an income (Banerjee, et al., 2006). Describing the characteristics of the informal economy is necessary in order to understand the work experiences of female street traders, who are employed informally.

It is also important to consider national policy which impacts on informal workers. The 1995 White Paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Businesses is critically assessed in Section 3.5. Critics of the policy have argued that although the policy initiatives have benefited small, medium and micro enterprises, informal workers employed in survivalist enterprises have received limited support (Skinner, 2000; Devey et al., 2007). Street traders are survivalist enterprise owners, thus it is important to understand that national support to those employed in this sector is lacking.

Because the empirical research was conducted in Pinetown in the eThekweni Municipality, it is important to describe the socio-economic context of the Municipal area. This discussion is presented in Section 3.6. Despite the economic importance of the region, the Municipality has the highest unemployment rate in South Africa (34%) (eThekweni Municipality, 2007). As a result many unemployed people in the Municipal area turn to the informal economy to earn a living. Although there are more male informal workers in South Africa, women tend to dominate certain sectors, such as street trading (Lund et al., 2000).

Section 3.7 describes the street trading sector in Durban in greater detail, in order to situate the working experiences of the research participants. In this Section, the characteristics and working conditions of street traders in Durban are described and past and present government policy that impacts on the lives of street traders in the Municipality is discussed. Research shows that many female street traders are the sole breadwinners in their households and are forced to enter the labour market in order to earn an income to support their families (Lund et al., 2000). Street traders work long hours under difficult working conditions for a limited, inconsistent wage. Although not adequately covered by national legalisation, the eThekweni Municipality has made some progress in producing policy to meet the needs of informal workers within the Municipal area. In 2001 the eThekweni Municipality launched the Informal Economy Policy to develop the informal economy and improve the working conditions of informal workers (Skinner, 2000). Despite some success, many informal workers in Durban are still unhappy with their work conditions and the conduct of the Municipality.

In Section 3.8 the local study context in Hill Street is introduced, wherein the empirical research took place. The following chapter provides an account of the research methodology and the various techniques used to sample, produce and interpret the data for this study.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the methodology that determined the techniques used to produce and interpret the primary data. The chapter outlines and justifies the methodological approach and the techniques that have been adopted in order to achieve the research objectives, as well as critically reflecting on issues of positionality and power that shaped the research process.

This study adopts a feminist methodology. As discussed in Chapter Two, feminist thought emerged within the discipline of human geography in the 1970s largely in response to the widespread application of positivist methodologies in social science research (Dixon and Jones III, 2006). In response, feminist geographers began to challenge the notion that science could produce objective, apolitical knowledge. Instead feminist scholars drew attention to the masculine epistemology that had dominated thinking within the discipline and the negative implications for women in society (Dixon and Jones III, 2006). In their critique of modernist approaches, feminist geographers continue to emphasise the situatedness and partiality of all knowledge claims (England, 2006). Feminist projects highlight the importance of reflexivity in their work, particularly with regard to thinking through the impacts of positionality and power in the production of academic knowledge (Ramazanoğlu and Holland, 2002). Although quantitative methods can be used in feminist research, a qualitative methodology is more commonly employed to engage with inner subjectivities and meaning (England, 2006). Feminist geographers also stress the importance of engaging and empowering the research participants to contribute to the production of knowledge during research encounters (Valentine, 2005).

In light of the selected feminist approach, this study adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology, which informed the selection of the techniques used to produce and analyse the data. With regard to the data production techniques, this study adopts a mixed method approach. A methodological approach that combines a variety of methods helps to enrich

the data set and maximise the understanding of the research problem (Valentine, 2005). Two data collection techniques were selected to produce the primary data, namely the intensive interview and the auto-photography technique. Both of these data production techniques provided an opportunity to explore the meanings that traders attach to their work spaces and experiences, as well as to their identities as women. The two techniques also provided the participants with the opportunity to actively participate in the knowledge production process (Valentine, 2005). This is important to the project's feminist agenda. Similarly, in accordance with this project's feminist methodology, the interviews and the photographs were interpreted using two qualitative analysis techniques, namely Dey's interpretive approach and the content analysis technique.

Section 4.2 and 4.3 introduce the primary and secondary data sources that were used in this research project. In each section, details are provided regarding the techniques used to both sample and produce the data. The two interpretive techniques that were used to analyse the interview transcripts and the photographs are presented and discussed in Section 4.4. In this study close attention was paid to issues of positionality, which influenced the research process at all levels. Various ethical issues concerning the politics of producing knowledge across difference were also taken seriously. Within Section 4.5 an effort has been made to demonstrate how the concept of reflexivity was applied throughout the research process. In Section 4.6 the chapter concludes with an outline of the practical constraints that were confronted when conducting this research project.

4.2 Primary data

The primary data in this study consists of a series of interviews, a sample of photographs and various documentary sources. An initial interview was conducted with an eThekweni Municipal official, who is employed in the Informal Trade Section of the Pinetown Business Support Unit. Sixteen intensive interviews were then conducted with female street traders operating in the Hill Street area. Six traders selected from the original sample participated in a further auto-photography task. These six women were interviewed a second time in order to describe and discuss the photographs that they had

taken. Finally, a single interview was conducted with the project translator. This section describes the primary data in relation to the research objectives and methodology. The techniques used to sample and conduct the interviews are presented and substantiated.

4.2.1 Interviewing local government

The manager of the Informal Trade Section of the Pinetown Business Support Unit was interviewed on the 6th June 2007. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the research project to the relevant Municipal authority and to request permission to interview a sample of female traders operating in central Pinetown. During the interview the researcher also proposed to pay each participant R30 to reimburse the women for their time and contribution. The Municipal official agreed to this suggestion. Street traders rely heavily on the income that is generated in a working day, and because the interviews were conducted during business hours at the traders' place of work, a monetary compensation was deemed appropriate. During this initial interview the contact details of the Chairman of Hlanganani Traders Association were obtained. The Chairman represents the traders in Hill Street and was later able to assist the researcher in familiarising herself with the study area and with selecting the initial participants.

Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the Municipal official who was interviewed in this study. Because of the participant's managerial position, a single interview was sufficient to obtain information about the study area and to gain permission to interview a sample of female traders (Kitchen and Tate, 2000).

Interview schedule

A semi-structured interview guide was designed to conduct this interview (see Appendix 3). This format allowed the interview to be conducted informally and it provided an opportunity to discuss issues as they arose within the conversation (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). A set of topics that needed to be discussed within the meeting were outlined prior to the interview. These topics acted as useful prompts to guide the conversation (Kitchen and Tate, 2000).

Conducting the interview

Before conducting the interview, the researcher introduced the project and explained the content of the UKZN consent form (see Appendix 4). The interview was tape recorded and later transcribed. Once this initial interview was complete, the first set of interviews with female street traders was conducted. The following section describes the techniques that were used to sample and conduct these interviews.

4.2.2 Interviewing female street traders

A sample of female street traders was interviewed in Hill Street. An intensive research design was selected and the technique used was the administration of an **open ended** interview schedule (Sayer, 1992). This technique provided the opportunity for rich conversation and the co-construction of knowledge (Valentine, 2005). During the interviews, the work experiences and identities of female street traders were explored. A female, native isiZulu speaker was employed to assist with conducting and translating the dialogue.

Sampling

Sixteen intensive interviews, using a semi-structured, **open ended** interview schedule, were conducted with female street traders operating legally within the study area. The relatively small sample is justified given the qualitative approach and intensive research design of this study, where an “illustrative” rather than a “representative” sample was required (Valentine 2001, 46). The intensive interviews provided a rich, detailed understanding of the work experiences of female street traders, which was sufficient to address the research objectives of this study (Valentine 2001).

A combination of non-probability sampling techniques was used to select this sample. The sixteen traders who were interviewed were selected using quota, convenience and snowball sampling techniques. A quota sampling technique is a purposive, non-random sampling method. This particular technique allows the researcher to purposively stratify the sample population into pre-determined groups or quotas, which reflect the research interests (Parfitt, 2005). In this study, the sample was stratified according to the age of the participants. The sample consisted of eight female traders younger than thirty-five years

of age, and eight female traders older than thirty-five years of age. Stratifying the sample in this way was done in order to examine whether age influences how female traders experience their work and construct their identities as women. In the data analysis, the participants are referred to as either younger or older female traders.

On the first day of the interview process (11 June 2007) in Hill Street, the Chairman of the Hlanganani Traders Association met with the researcher and the project translator in the study area. The Chairman helped select the first seven participants in this study using a convenience sampling technique (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Female traders were approached in central Pinetown and asked if they would like to participate in this research project. Provided that the traders fitted the quota requirements, appointments were made and the interviews were conducted. A snowball sampling technique was used to select the remaining participants, as the traders that had been interviewed were able to direct the researcher to other potential participants (Valentine, 2005).

Interview schedule

The interview schedule designed for the initial sixteen interviews was divided into four different sections (see Appendix 5). To begin each interview, the participants were asked to provide a retrospective account of their working day, describing all of the activities that they had engaged in within a twenty-four hour period. Valentine (2005, 119) argues that this exercise can assist the researcher in gaining valuable insight into, “the structure of a respondent’s everyday lifeworld”. In this study, the participants were asked what work activities they engaged in, where these activities took place, and how much time each activity took. These retrospective accounts provided an understanding of the *nature of work* that female street traders engage in, both within their homes and in the informal economy. The exercise also revealed the strategies that female traders employ in order to co-ordinate their multiple work tasks across time and space. The remaining questions in Section A of the interview schedule consisted of a set of open and closed ended questions. These questions were compiled to prompt the traders’ retrospective accounts and to ensure that sufficient information was obtained to contextualise the traders’ work experiences.

The next two sections of the interview schedule (Section B and C) contained questions which aimed to explore the *meanings* that female traders attach to their work experiences and to their *identities* as women. These two sections were designed in a semi-structured format that allowed for a level of flexibility in the interviews (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). This particular format also provided the researcher with an opportunity to co-produce an understanding of how female traders experience and interpret issues regarding space, gender and work (Cloke et al., 2004). Although a set of key questions were outlined prior to the interviews, these questions were designed to guide the dialogue and the order and wording of the questions was not strictly adhered to (Kitchen and Tate, 2000).

The final section of the interview schedule (Section D) was designed in a structured format. This section consisted of a set of closed ended questions that were asked in a standardised manner to all of the participants (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). These questions aimed to gather necessary background information on the participants in order to contextualise their working realities.

Conducting the interviews

Before interviewing the sample of female street traders, an effort was made to set up a rapport with the participants (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). The purpose of the study and the content of the UKZN consent form were carefully explained to the participants (see Appendices 6 and 7). The participants were informed that the study was voluntary and that their identities would remain anonymous. In order to protect the identities of the traders who participated in this study, pseudonyms are used to refer to the participants within this thesis. Once the consent form had been clarified, the participants were asked to provide their signed consent to participate in the project.

During the interviews an attempt was made to phrase the questions in a way that was interesting and understandable to the participants. The researcher tried to personalise the questions posed by relating the questions to the participants' working realities (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). An effort was also made to share information and to listen to the participants' views and experiences with empathy and respect (Valentine, 2005). This was important in terms of the project's feminist methodology. In sharing knowledge, the

researcher was careful to avoid presenting her views in a way that would appear authoritative. Similarly, an attempt was made to avoid posing questions in such a way that pre-empted particular responses. Instead the participants were encouraged to tell their own stories (Valentine, 2005). Through this dialogue, the researcher was challenged to reflect on her personal pre-conceptions and ideas, as an interpretation of the traders' work experiences was negotiated (Valentine, 2005).

After interviewing a local Municipal official, and talking to the Chairman of the Hlanganani Traders Association, the researcher decided not to tape record the interviews. Both the Municipal official and the Chairman pointed out that many of the local traders were distrustful of the Municipality (Participant A, 6 June 2007). As a result, some of the participants were concerned that their responses would be shown to local government officials, and that this would compromise their ability to trade in the vicinity (Jabu, 14 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007). Because the interview questions explored issues related to the traders' informal employment, the researcher felt that tape recording the interviews might intimidate the participants and limit their responses. Instead the traders' responses were carefully recorded during the interviews. Table 4.1 below presents the details of the interviews that were conducted with the sixteen female street traders. The table shows that the initial sixteen interviews were conducted between the 11th and the 18th June 2007. Eight female street traders under thirty-five years of age and eight older traders over the age of thirty-five years of age were interviewed. The table also shows that the auto-photography interviews were conducted between the 27th June and the 5th July 2007.

On the 20th June 2007, the researcher met all the participants together at a locality within the case study area. The interviews were complete and the researcher thanked the traders for their participation. Each woman was given R30 in a sealed envelope. The participants were not informed of the amount prior to their participation in the study. Instead the researcher and the Chairman of the Hlanganani Traders Association decided that it was more appropriate to call all of the participants together after the interviews were complete and to give thanks and present the money in private. In this way traders that did not participate in the research would not feel prejudiced.

Table 4.1 Interviews conducted with sixteen female street traders (June and July 2007)

Participants:	Participants' ages:	Interview date:	Auto-photography interview date:
Ayanda	> 35 years	11 June 2007	
Busi	> 35 years	11 June 2007	2 July 2007
Cecilia	> 35 years	11 June 2007	
Dudu	< 35 years	12 June 2007	27 June 2007
Eva	< 35 years	12 June 2007	27 June 2007
Francis	< 35 years	12 June 2007	
Gertrude	> 35 years	12 June 2007	
Hope	< 35 years	14 June 2007	
Isabella	< 35 years	14 June 2007	5 July 2007
Jabu	< 35 years	14 June 2007	
Karabo	< 35 years	14 June 2007	
Lindiwe	< 35 years	18 June 2007	
Maria	> 35 years	18 June 2007	2 July 2007
Nosipho	> 35 years	18 June 2007	
Olivia	> 35 years	18 June 2007	
Phumzi	> 35 years	18 June 2007	2 July 2007

After giving thanks, six of the traders were purposively selected to participate in the auto-photography exercise. The task was explained to the traders, who all agreed to participate. Disposable cameras were distributed to the sample and arrangements were made to collect the cameras between the 26th and the 29th of June 2007, after a one week period. The techniques used to sample and conduct the auto-photography task are presented in the following section. Once the photographs had been developed, they were scanned and the original images were returned to the participants. A second set of interviews were then conducted with the sample of women in order to discuss the photographs. The auto-photography task is discussed in the following section.

4.2.3 The auto-photography task

The auto-photography technique was selected as part of this study's interpretive, mixed method approach. The photographs illustrate the participants' lived realities and provide insight into how female traders understand their roles as women, business people and mothers, in relation to their work spaces and experiences. This technique was also selected because it provided the participants with an opportunity to represent their own lives in ways that were not framed by the researcher's questions and language (Dodman, 2003). Dodman (2003, 294) argues that verbal methods that rely on the use language can "perpetuate and exaggerate a wide variety of social inequalities". The feminist approach adopted in this project is sensitive to the power dynamics at work in research relationships. Thus the auto-photography technique was selected as a means by which to minimise the unequal hierarchies of power that define academic research encounters (Valentine, 2005). Through the auto-photography exercise, the participants were empowered to express themselves and their experiences visually and creatively (Dodman, 2003).

Sampling

The six women who participated in the exercise were selected purposively from the original sample (Kitchen and Tate, 2000) (See table 4.1). The participants were selected on the basis of their ability to engage with the researcher, and according to the depth of information that they were willing to provide during their initial interviews. The six women produced seventy-two photographs in total which illustrate their work experiences at home and in the informal economy. Twenty-four photographs were purposively selected to be interpreted on the basis of the quality and significance of their visual content. This data set was sufficient to compliment the data generated from the semi-structured interviews and to enrich the researcher's understanding of the empirical data.

Conducting the auto-photography task

The auto-photography participants were each asked to take twelve photographs in order to visually depict their work experiences. Two themes were created by the researcher to categorise the photographs. These two themes were "happiness and strength" and "heaviness and hardship". Using the themes, the researcher was able to reflect on the

participants' negative and positive experiences within their domestic and informal work spaces. This understanding helped the researcher explore the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their everyday work. Cards were produced and were given to the participants to accompany the disposable cameras. Each card explained the task and introduced the two themes in isiZulu. Using the themes, the participants were asked to take their photographs in both their 'home' and 'informal work' spaces. There was no limit placed on the number of photographs that could be taken in either place. In reviewing the photographs, the researcher considered the spaces in which the women took their images. To interpret the data, a second set of interviews were conducted with the auto-photography participants. The techniques used to conduct these interviews are discussed below.

4.2.4 Interviewing the auto-photography participants

The photographs that were taken by the second sample of women provided a unique, visual source of information illustrating the working realities of female street traders. The second set of interviews was important to provide the participants with an opportunity to describe their images and to elaborate on their reasons for taking particular photographs. The interviews were also important because they allowed the researcher to discuss the images with the participants and to challenge her understanding. In this way an interpretation of the photographs was co-produced (Valentine, 2005).

An informal conversational interview approach was adopted for this set of interviews. This approach allowed issues to be discussed spontaneously in conversation. No topics or key questions were outlined prior to the interviews and instead the participants were encouraged to express their views and share their experiences in relation to their photographs (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Table 4.1 presents the details of the six interviews that were conducted.

4.2.5 Interviewing the project translator

A single interview was conducted with the project translator on the 1st of August 2007. The purpose of this interview was to explore the translator's thoughts and feelings regarding her experience translating for this project. Conducting research in a cross-

cultural setting is difficult, particularly when the researcher is unable to speak the native language of the participants. Thus it was important to interview the project translator in order to reflect on some of the difficulties that arise when translating meaning across cultural and language divides.

Interview schedule

A semi-structured interview guide was designed to conduct this interview (see Appendix 8). This particular format was the most suitable design because it allowed for problematic translations and interpretations to be negotiated using various examples from the interviews (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). During the discussion, some of the cultural nuances implicit in the style of speaking and the type of language used by the participants were also explored.

The interview guide was divided into three sections which reflected on different aspects of the interview and translation process. The first section focused on establishing the translator's professional credentials. The second section investigated the translator's feelings regarding the interviews and the participants' responses. The open-ended questions in this section focused on probing the aspects of translation process that the translator found difficult, and on discussing the style of language used by the participants. The third section of the interview guide centred on issues of positionality. The questions in this section aimed to explore how the translator felt about her own positionality and the positionality of the researcher throughout the interview process (Butler, 2001; England, 2006). This set of questions sought to investigate to what extent the translator felt that issues of positionality impacted on the responses provided by the participants, and to what extent the translator felt that the trust of the traders was gained.

Conducting the interview

Once the purpose of the interview had been explained, the project translator agreed to participate in the interview and signed the UKZN consent form (see Appendix 8). The questions in each of the sections were designed to guide the conversation around a set of predetermined topics. The interview was conducted informally and many of the questions

were changed and expanded upon as each topic was discussed (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). The interview was tape recorded and later transcribed.

4.2.6 Documentary sources

Various documentary sources were also used in this study in order to understand the work experiences of female street traders. These sources are described below.

Government documents

The eThekweni Municipality Informal Economy Policy and the eThekweni Municipality Economic Review 2006/07 provided primary data used in this study. The 2001 Informal Economy Policy was used to understand the nature and dynamics of the informal economy within the study area. The 2006/07 Economic Review provided information that helped situate the circumstances of poverty and unemployment that confront many informal workers in Durban. Both of these documents were obtained from local government websites.

National statistics

Three national statistical reports also provided primary data in this study. The three reports that were used were the March 2007 Labour Force Survey, the 2006 General Household Survey and the 2007 mid-year population estimates. These reports were useful in providing statistical information pertaining to the demographics of South Africa, as well as information on the employment figures in the country both within the formal and informal economies. All three reports were published by Statistics South Africa in 2007 and were obtained from the organisation's website. The following section presents the secondary data that was used in this research project.

4.3 Secondary data

The secondary data for this study includes information and theory that was sourced from various journal articles and books. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to both contextualise the study, and to construct the conceptual framework used to

conceptualise the research problem and the research methodology. In order to provide a context or background for the study, literature on South African society and the country's economy was consulted. Particular attention was given to journal articles and books that focus on the informal economy in South Africa, and on women's participation in street trading within the eThekweni Municipality.

The theoretical framework draws from social and feminist geography literature focusing on space, gender and work. In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight the theory is applied to interpret the empirical data and address the research aim. The relevant literature was obtained from various journal articles and books that were sourced primarily from the UKZN libraries. Literature from other University libraries within the province was also used in this study, and this material was obtained through the UKZN inter-library loan service.

4.4 Data interpretation

Two different data analysis techniques were applied to interpret the primary data in this study. Dey's (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) interpretative approach was used to analyse the interview transcripts and the content analysis technique was applied to analyse the photographs (Rose, 2001). Both techniques were selected in line with this project's qualitative, interpretive methodology. Section 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 describe each technique and explain how the techniques were applied to the analysis of the primary data. It is important to point out that although the techniques are described in a fairly prescriptive manner, the final act of interpretation was far more complex.

4.4.1 Interpreting the interviews

Kitchen and Tate (2000) provide a succinct summary of Dey's (1993) interpretive approach, which is referred to in this section. This approach was selected to analyse the interview data because it is a qualitative approach that compliments this project's methodology. Dey's technique consists of three steps, namely the *description* of the data,

the *classification* of the data, and the final task of *explaining* the patterns and relationships that emerge from the analysis process (Dey, 1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000).

The first step of the approach involves arranging the generated information into an accessible format and describing the data set. In research projects that have used interviews as a data production technique, this step includes transcribing the interviews and annotating the interview transcripts (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Kitchen and Tate (2000, 233) argue that it is crucial that this first step produces “thick” description because it forms the basis of the analysis. The authors describe “thick” description as description which is rich and detailed and that involves more than merely relating the empirical evidence (Kitchen and Tate, 2000, 233). For example, when annotating the transcripts it is important to also record notes on the situational context in which the interview took place. Kitchen and Tate (2000, 233) argue that in the course of an interview, “the social, spatial and temporal context can all significantly affect the data generated”. These issues need to be carefully considered in the analysis process.

In this study the interviews were not tape recorded and instead the participants’ responses were recorded during the dialogue. In line with Dey’s (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) approach, notes regarding the situational context of each interview were documented after the interviews were conducted. The time, place and circumstances surrounding the interviews were also recorded. Similarly, notes on the mood of the participants and their eagerness or apathy to provide answers to particular questions were recorded. Finally, the researcher documented other personal reflections concerning how the questions were posed and which questions needed to be reconsidered. After each day of interviewing, the interview transcriptions and the reflections were typed up. In order to aid later analysis, each interview transcript was organised into three sections based on the focus of the three research objectives. The notes and reflections that were produced served to enrich the description of the data and helped in the creation of the master and sub-codes needed for the next level of analysis.

In the next step of Dey’s (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) approach the data are *classified* and *coded*. With reference to the detailed annotations, the researcher is tasked

with identifying a set of themes, or recurring issues, that emerge from the data set (Kitchen and Tate, 2000, 233). Because there are many ways to interpret data, the themes must be negotiated in relation to the research objectives (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). The researcher then develops a set of master codes and sub-codes from the list of themes. The classification process is iterative and the developed codes may be changed and revised as the researcher works through the data set (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). During this reiterative process, the codes are *split* and *spliced* in order to ensure that the final codes are exhaustive (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). *Splitting* the data involves reorganising the created codes. Through this process, codes that inappropriately represent the data are broken down and similar codes are collapsed together (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). It is crucial to split the data before moving onto the final phase of analysis, because this step allows for the “cross-checking” and refining of the selected codes (Kitchen and Tate, 2000, 245). Once the codes are reorganised, the data is spliced. *Splicing* the codes involves linking together two or more codes in potentially revealing ways (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). It is not necessary to splice all of the codes, and instead codes should only be spliced when the outcome is thought to be potentially significant (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Once the codes are finalised, the researcher physically codes and sorts the data (Kitchen and Tate, 2000).

In this study, a process of ‘open coding’ was used to identify recurring themes that emerged from the data set (Crang, 2005). In this process, the researcher moved carefully through the annotated transcripts, noting down any important points or ideas that came to mind (Crang, 2005). A set of theoretical memos were compiled that identified key themes that linked the data in meaningful ways to the theory and to the research objectives. These themes were then used to create the master and sub-codes (Crang, 2005). Creating the sets of codes was an iterative process and the codes were split and spliced in accordance with Dey’s (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) technique. Once the codes had been finalised, a series of detailed tables were created wherein the data was classified and sorted. Phrases and quotes from the interviews were entered onto the tables. These tables presented the data in an accessible format that assisted with the next step of the analysis.

The final step in Dey’s (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) interpretive approach requires the researcher to *explain* any perceived trends or patterns that emerge from the analysis

process (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). By reorganising the data in the previous steps, particular links and relationships became apparent within the data set. In this study Dey's (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) approach was applied and particular patterns and connections were identified and explained. This relatively intuitive part of the analysis process required the researcher to infer meaning or interpret the data (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). In order to interpret the data as accurately as possible, the presented arguments were justified and supported by referring to specific examples of empirical evidence (Kitchen and Tate, 2000).

4.4.2 Interpreting the photographs

The content analysis technique was selected to analyse the photographic data that was generated in this study. This particular technique was first developed in the post- World War II period as a scientific approach to analyse written and spoken cultural texts (Rose, 2001). Over the years the approach has faced extensive criticism because of its positivist philosophy and its failure to adopt a reflexive position in research (Rose, 2001). In recent years the approach has been adapted and used by social scientists to analyse visual texts. In these studies, the researchers make explicit the qualitative procedures involved in the approach (Rose, 2001). Similarly, this study applies the technique in a qualitative, interpretive manner that is consistent with the research methodology.

The content analysis technique that was applied in this study consists of four different steps. The first step requires the researcher to select a relevant sample (Rose, 2001). This particular approach is used mostly by social science researchers who are working with large samples that need to be analysed statistically (Rose, 2001). In these studies, it is important that the researcher selects a sample that is both "representative and significant" (Rose, 2001, 57). The sample of photographs used in this particular project was relatively small and it was not intended to be representative. Details regarding the technique used to select the auto-photography sample are discussed in Section 4.2.3. Because of the size and nature of the selected sample, the images produced in this study were not analysed quantitatively. Instead the researcher employed a qualitative, thematic approach to code and classify the data.

In the second step of the analysis, a set of recurring themes that emerge from the photographs are identified. These themes are developed by the researcher in relation to the research objectives and the theory used in the study (Rose, 2001). The themes are then used to create a set of analytical codes. These codes are produced iteratively and may be broken down or joined together as the researcher works through the images (Rose, 2001). In this study, a set of codes were created using the above mentioned method. The researcher allocated each photograph a number and carefully examined the photographs in order to identify interesting patterns or themes in the data. These initial thoughts and ideas were then developed into a set of master and sub- codes. During this process the researcher ensured that the codes linked meaningfully to the research objectives and to the theoretical framework. As the researcher worked through the photographs the codes were refined to ensure that the final set were exhaustive and did overlap in any way (Rose, 2001). The two master codes used in this study were 'heaviness and hardship' and 'happiness and strength'.

Once the final set of codes is selected, the images are physically coded and sorted. During this step each image is examined thoroughly and systematically and the relevant codes are attached to the image (Rose, 2001). The coding process can be done manually by creating an index card for each image and recording down the codes that apply to the photograph. Alternatively, the codes can be recorded on a computer spreadsheet (Rose, 2001). In this study, the researcher created data tables using a word processor. The created tables listed the final set of codes and alongside these codes the numbers of relevant photographs were recorded. The purpose of this step was to arrange the data into a workable format to assist with the final level of analysis. Once the photographs were sorted according to the selected codes it became easier to explore potentially revealing patterns and relationships in the data set (Rose, 2001).

In the final level of analysis the trends that have been identified in the data must be explored and explained in relation to the theory and the research objectives (Rose, 2001). Researchers that opt to analyse their data quantitatively use frequency counts to highlight trends in the data. Whether patterns in the data set are supported statistically or not, it is important that the identified trends are analysed critically. A critical analysis involves

considering the emerging connections and relationships in relation to the wider social context in which the images were produced (Rose, 2001). In this study the photographs were not analysed statistically. Instead the images were interpreted with the research participants and the project translator, during a second set of interviews that were conducted after the photographs had been taken. In this way the analysis was critical and sensitive to the context in which the images were produced.

During these interviews, the participants were asked to describe and interpret their images. With the help of the project translator, the researcher then interpreted the participants' interpretations of their photographs. Thus an understanding of the meanings that female street traders attach to their work spaces was co-produced through open dialogue (Valentine, 2005). It is important to recognise that the interpretation of the data in this study was subjective. The researcher analysed the images with a particular way of seeing that was shaped not only by the research objectives and theoretical framework, but also by her gender, race, class and culture (Rose, 2001). The following section deals with the impact of positionality and power on the data interpretation.

4.5 Critical reflections

Researchers producing knowledge claims about the world are confronted with a range of epistemological and ethical challenges. Social researchers have the responsibility to represent the realities of their research participants as accurately and as ethically as possible. This is a difficult task given the subjective and situated nature of knowledge production (Crang, 2005a). Producing academic knowledge is also an act of power. In a research relationship the researcher has the power to choose how to present the research findings and how to represent the lives of others (Ley and Mountz, 2001). This study was conducted in a **cross cultural** context, where issues of positionality and power needed careful consideration. Thus it was important that the researcher remained reflexive throughout the research process. This section discusses some of the epistemological and ethical challenges that were confronted in this study regarding positionality, power and ethics.

England (2006, 289) states that, “positionality is about how people view the world from different embodied locations”. A researcher’s positionality is shaped by a range of factors, including their age, gender, race, class and the theoretical background that frames their research. These factors all influence the way in which a research project is approached; from the initial conceptualisation of the research topic to the analysis of the empirical data (Butler, 2001). Because of the researcher’s intimate role in the research process, it is impossible to produce objective knowledge claims about the world. It is acknowledged here that the interpretation of data is inherently subjective and that the results produced represent a set of partial, situated truths (England, 2006). Thinking reflexively about the role of the researcher in the research process is at the heart of the feminist methodology that is adopted in this study. Thus issues of positionality and interpretation have been taken seriously by the researcher throughout the different phases of this project.

In a cross-cultural research context difference is felt more acutely. In this particular study the researcher differed from the research participants in many ways. The researcher and the research participants do not share the same language or culture, for example, which had implications for how the data was produced and interpreted. Researchers conducting cross-cultural research confront a number of challenges and criticisms (Skelton, 2001). Critics have argued that it is difficult for researchers to understand and represent the lives of individuals from different racial or cultural backgrounds, or to obtain an “insider’s view”. Researchers embarking on such projects are presented with the challenge of how best to negotiate difference in the research context in order to produce legitimate arguments (Skelton, 2001). It is important to point out, however, that the debates on the “insider-outsider” binary have developed in complexity in recent years. Social scientists nowadays recognise that the binary is not as stable and fixed as was first presumed. Instead difference and identity are understood to be relationally constructed (Crang, 2003). Identities are negotiated throughout the research process, and in a research context the researcher may shift numerous times between being perceived as an insider and an outsider (Visser, 2001).

In this study I made an effort to review my positionality as critically as possible. In particular, I was reflexive of the fact that I viewed the data through a particular theoretical

lens and with a particular set of research questions in mind. When analysing the results, I remained conscious that the results were partial, subjective truths, and thus an effort was made to avoid making broad generalisations regarding the data (England, 2006). In order to present the results as accurately as possible, I made use of direct quotes and I attempted to present data that contradicted perceived trends (Butler, 2001). I also employed two qualitative, interpretive techniques to explore meaning and identity as fully as possible, and the project translator assisted in situating the participants' responses within their cultural context. It is important to note, however, that it is not possible to achieve a level of "transparent reflexivity" (Rose, 1997, 311). Rose (1997) argues that no amount of critical reflection can enable the researcher to fully know the self and the research context, and the impact of both on the research process.

There are also a number of political concerns that arise when researchers attempt to produce knowledge claims about different groups in society. These issues are even more important to consider when the research participants are marginalised in society, as was the case in this study where the participants are poor black women (Skelton, 2001). In academic research the researcher is in a position of power to decide what to study and how to represent the research findings (Ley and Mountz, 2001). Feminist geographers adopt methodologies that are sensitive to the unequal power relations that characterise traditional academic research. They argue that researchers need to openly recognise and deal with issues of difference and power in research relationships. The methods that feminist geographers adopt attempt to minimise these hierarchies of power, by empowering and actively including research participants in the knowledge production process (Skelton, 2001).

To address issues of power in this study an attempt was made to conduct the project in a collaborative way, where the subject-object distinction was played down as far as possible. I remained reflexive of the power relations at play during the interviews and carried out the study with empathy and respect (England, 2006). In the intensive interviews the participants were able to share ideas and information. During these conversations the women also participated in the production and interpretation of the data (Valentine, 2005). The auto-photography technique provided a means by which to

empower the participants further, by allowing them to represent their lives unconstrained by my questions or language (Dodman, 2003). The following section of this thesis outlines some of the practical constraints that were experienced when conducting this study.

4.6 Constraints

Three key factors constrained this research project. Firstly, because of the time restriction, I was not able to engage with a larger sample of female traders. The data generated from the mixed method approach was rich and detailed, however, and was sufficient to gather the necessary information to address the research objectives.

Secondly, the language barrier also posed a significant constraint to this project. Although an isiZulu speaking translator was employed to translate the interviews, an understanding of the local language would have been preferable. During each interview I posed the questions in English to the project translator, who then translated the questions into isiZulu for the participants. Once the participants had responded, the translator translated each response which I then recorded as accurately as possible. To compensate for this limitation, I was careful to clarify ambiguous responses with the translator and the participants during our conversations. An interview was also conducted with the project translator after the interviews with the participants were complete. In this interview I discussed problematic translations and interpretations with the translator. Despite these efforts, it is likely that a number of subtle nuances were overlooked in the translation of the interviews.

Thirdly, interviewing the traders at their place of work also presented a number of challenges. Not only were some of the traders distracted during their interviews, as they conducted sales simultaneously, but there was also a fear on the part of some traders that I was associated with the Municipality. During the period that the empirical research was conducted in June and July 2007, relations between local traders and the Municipality

were particularly strained. The eThekweni Municipality was in the process of carrying out a series of raids in Hill Street in order to monitor the illegal trade in the area. Similar raids were conducted in the Durban city centre during this time, and street traders throughout the Municipal area were angry and dissatisfied with the conduct of the police and the local authority. Visser (2001) argues that it is important to acknowledge the political- temporal context in which a research project is conducted, as current political issues can impact on the research process in many different ways. In this case, some of the legal traders were suspicious of my intentions because of the current political conflict with the Municipality (see Appendices 1 and 2). Thus it is possible that the participants may have provided guarded responses to the questions regarding their informal employment, for fear that their comments could jeopardise their access to a trading site. To address this issue I assured the participants that their responses would remain confidential. To further ensure that the participants felt comfortable to share their experiences, the interviews were not tape recorded nor were the participants' personal details taken. In the interpretation of the empirical data in this thesis, the participants are referred to using pseudonyms.

4.7 Conclusion

This study adopts a feminist methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the various techniques that were applied to produce and analyse the empirical data, in light of the methodology that was adopted and the research objectives. A feminist methodology is sensitive to issues of power and positionality. It is also important that feminist research is reflexive, and that an effort is made to allow the research participants to contribute to the production of knowledge regarding their lives and experience (Ramazanoğlu and Holland, 2002). In light of the selected methodology, this study adopts a range of qualitative, interpretive techniques to both produce and analyse the data.

The primary data for this study consists of a series of interviews, a sample of photographs and a number of government documents. To generate the interview and photographic data a semi-structured, open-ended interview schedule was administered and an auto-photography technique was used (Sayer, 1992; Dodman, 2003). Both data production

techniques allowed the researcher to explore the inner subjectivities and identities of female street traders in relation to their work experiences. The techniques also provided the research participants with the opportunity to express their views and challenge the researcher's interpretation. During the interviews, for example, the researcher and the participants were able to openly discuss notions of gender and femininity. In these discussions the participants told their own stories and challenged the researcher's understanding (Valentine, 2005). The photographs also played an important role in this regard because they allowed the participants to visually capture their lives and experiences in a way that was unconstrained by the researcher's questions and language (Dodman, 2003). Furthermore, by using a mixed method approach a rich data set was generated and the understanding of the traders' experiences and emotions was maximised (Valentine, 2005).

Section 4.1 discusses the data production techniques used in this study. Specific attention is paid to outlining and justifying the methods used to sample and carry out the interviews and the auto-photography task. In this study sixteen intensive interviews were conducted with legal female street traders operating within the Pinetown CBD area. A combination of non-probability sampling techniques was used to select this sample and the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). A translator was hired to help assist in translating the interviews. Once the interviews had been conducted, six women from the original sample were asked to participate in the auto-photography task. In this task the participants were given disposable cameras and asked to take twelve photographs of their work experiences at home and in the informal economy (Dodman, 2003). Two themes were created around which the participants were asked to categorise their photographs. The two themes were "heaviness and hardship" and "happiness and strength". Once the photographs had been taken, the participants were interviewed a second time in order to describe and interpret their images. By analysing the images in relation to the two themes and the intensive interview data, the researcher was able to understand the meanings that female traders attach to their work spaces and experiences more clearly.

Section 4.4 presents the techniques applied to interpret the data in this study. In accordance with the project's interpretive approach, two qualitative techniques were selected to analyse the empirical data, namely Dey's (1993 in Kitchen and Tate, 2000) interpretive approach and the content analysis technique (Rose, 2001). Both of these techniques allowed the researcher to work closely with the data set in order to identify revealing trends and relationships. These trends were then explored and interpreted in light of the research objectives and the theoretical framework. Interpreting the data and presenting the results of this study was difficult, and it was important to remain reflexive throughout the research process. Section 4.5 critically reflects on issues of power, positionality and ethics which shaped all aspects of the research process. An attempt is made in this section to outline the various ethical and political challenges experienced, and to discuss how these challenges were addressed in this project. In this respect, the researcher was sensitive to her positionality and employed a range of data production and analysis techniques that allowed the participants to partake in the construction of knowledge as much as possible (Butler, 2001; England, 2006). Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief description of the practical constraints that limited this study, including time and political constraints, as well as the limitations imposed by the language barrier that existed between the researcher and the research participants.

The following three chapters in this thesis interpret and discuss the results of this study. Each of the three chapters presents a rich and concise analysis of a different theme that was derived from the research objectives. The three chapters are interlinked and they all contribute the addressing the research aim.

Chapter Five

Everyday work experiences in Hill Street

5.1 Introduction

The informal street trading sector provides an important source of employment for many impoverished black women who are unable to find work in the formal sectors (Lund, et al., 2002). Moving out of their traditional workplaces at home, female street traders enter the informal economy in order to generate an income to support their extended families (Skinner, 2002). As women, female traders are tasked with managing their trade and ensuring that their domestic duties are fulfilled. This research aims to explore the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work experiences in their domestic and informal work spaces. The empirical findings of this research are presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Each of these three chapters focuses on a particular theme derived from the three research objectives of this study.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the work experiences of female street traders at home and in Hill Street. Female traders engage in a variety of domestic and informal work activities as they move between their physical spaces of ‘home’ and their ‘informal work’ spaces. Section 5.2 identifies the activities that constitute the everyday domestic and informal work of female traders in order to describe the nature of their work. Negotiating multiple work tasks across time and space can be challenging. A range of factors influences the relative vulnerability of individual traders and their ability to cope with the demands of their dual roles as breadwinners and homemakers. These factors are discussed in Section 5.3 in relation to the strategies that female street traders employ in order to co-ordinate their multiple responsibilities. Finally, Section 5.4 examines the different ways in which female traders experience and feel about their domestic and informal work and the task of negotiating their different work activities on a daily basis.

What is particularly important to this study is the way in which the work experiences of female street traders take place in engendered public and private space. The theoretical

framework argues that how space is conceptualised impacts on the construction of gendered identities, as space and gender are understood to be mutually constitutive (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999). Thus to explore the identities of female street traders at work it is important to reflect on the meanings that female traders attach to their work spaces. As such, Chapter Six explores the meanings that female traders attach to their work informal and domestic work spaces and Chapter Seven identifies and reflects on the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work experiences. Within these two chapters the theoretical framework is applied to explore the connections between how female traders conceptualise their work spaces and how they define themselves as women.

5.2 The domestic and informal work activities of female street traders

Female street traders in Hill Street engage in a wide variety of work activities in their physical ‘home’ and ‘informal work’ spaces. This section aims to describe these work activities in order to gain an understanding of the nature of work of female traders. Table 5.1 below illustrates the everyday work routine of two of the female traders that participated in this study. These two examples provide an outline of a typical working day for these two women. The work activities of female traders are discussed in this section with reference to Table 5.1.

5.2.1 Domestic work activities

Female street traders engage in a variety of domestic activities in their households, including tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and gardening. The empirical evidence in this study suggests that female street traders are largely responsible for completing all of the domestic chores in their households. For example, the majority of the traders who were interviewed in this study are responsible for preparing breakfast and dinner for their families each day (see Table 5.1). Similarly, most of the research participants are primarily responsible for cleaning their homes and washing and ironing their families’ clothing.

Table 5.1 Everyday work routine of Cecilia (11 June 2007) and Olivia (18 June 2007)

Time:	Cecilia¹	Time:	Olivia²
3:30am	Wakes, bathes, prepares breakfast	5:30am	Wakes, boils water for husband's bath, prepares breakfast for family
4:40am	Catches a taxi to Hill Street	8:00am	Catches a taxi to Hill Street
5:00am	Collects stock from storage and sets up stall	8:40am	Collects stock from storage and sets up stall
5:30am to 5:30pm	Deals with customers and makes sales	9:00am to 4:30pm	Deals with customers and makes sales
5:30pm	Packs up stall and returns stock to storage	4:30pm	Packs up stall and returns stock to storage
6:00pm	Catches a taxi home to Nazareth	5:00pm	Catches a taxi home to Clermont
6:30pm to 9:00pm	Cooks dinner and prepares for bed	5:40pm to 8:00pm	Cooks dinner, washes the dishes and completes household chores before bed

Female street traders work long hours, with little leisure time for themselves. In this study, twelve of the sixteen participants noted that they do not trade on Sunday and instead use this time to catch up on the domestic chores that they have not been able to complete during the week.

5.2.2 Informal work activities

Female street traders also have a number of important work responsibilities in terms of managing their businesses. Most of the traders who were interviewed for this study start their day by collecting their goods from their storage facilities, as Cecilia and Olivia do

¹ Cecilia left her unsupportive partner and lives alone in a rented house in Nazareth, Pinetown. She has two daughters and three grandchildren who live with her parents in Mtubatuba, a small town 250kms north of Durban. Cecilia is the sole provider for herself and her dependants in Mtubatuba.

² Olivia lives in Clermont with her husband and their twelve year old son. Until recently, Olivia's husband was unemployed and her income was used to support their entire household.

(see Table 5.1). These traders rent space in storage containers in Hill Street to store their stock. The facilities are located a short distance from the formalised trading sites. After setting up their goods, the women deal with customers and make sales until early evening, at which time they pack up their goods and prepare to return home. All of the participants in this study purchase new stock once or twice a week from various local stores. Four of the participants purchase new goods from stores within the Pinetown area and the remainder of the women travel to the Durban city centre to buy new stock. Beside these activities, female street traders also have the responsibilities of paying their monthly municipal permit fee and managing their business finances.

Thus, in their everyday work spaces, female street traders engage in a variety of different domestic and informal work activities. Co-ordinating multiple work tasks across time and space can be challenging. A range of factors determines the vulnerability of individual traders and impacts on how these women cope with the demands of their dual roles as providers and homemakers. The following section outlines these factors in relation to the strategies that female traders employ in order to co-ordinate their work activities on a daily basis.

5.3 Vulnerability and coping strategies

Female street traders engage in a number of coping strategies in order to meet their domestic and informal work obligations. A range of factors, such as the wealth and ability of female traders to access support networks, influences the strategies available to these women and their ability to cope. Exploring the vulnerability and coping mechanisms of female street traders is important in order to contextualise the work experiences of the participants in Hill Street.

5.3.1 Age

Age plays a role in determining how well female street traders are able to cope with the task of managing both a businesses and a household. Older traders tend to suffer from physical ailments

that make their work more difficult. Six of the eight participants in this study who are over thirty-five years of age complained that they find it exhausting to co-ordinate their work tasks on a daily basis.³ Busi, for example, noted that because she is old her knees are giving her trouble and this makes her domestic and informal work particularly strenuous (Busi, 11 June 2007). Phumzi also complained of physical ailments related to her old age. She described how she experiences pains in her hands and that her body is swelling. Washing clothes in cold water is thus painful for Phumzi because of her aching hands (Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

5.3.2 Wealth

The relative wealth of individual traders also impacts on how well they are able to cope with meeting their diverse work responsibilities. Wealthier traders are less vulnerable than female traders with limited financial resources. With access to sufficient funds, female traders are able to hire paid help at home. Household help relieves some of the burden of the domestic responsibilities from individual traders. Three of the traders who participated in this study employ domestic assistants at home (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Phumzi, 11 June 2007). Cecilia, for example, is able to work seven days a week and manage her household chores because she pays an assistant to take care of her domestic duties at home (Cecilia, 11 June 2007). Similarly, Ayanda employs casual workers to assist her with her household cleaning and washing when she is sick or tired (Ayanda, 11 June 2007). Phumzi also relies on domestic help and she employs an assistant to help her with the household chores on the weekends. Unlike Cecilia and Ayanda, however, Phumzi does not pay her young female helper in cash and instead buys her chocolates and chips (Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

Wealthier traders can also afford to hire assistants for their businesses. These assistants help their employers watch over their stalls, tend to customers and carry their stock to and from their storage facilities. In this study, four of the participants employ assistants to help them manage their stalls in Pinetown. Isabella (14 June 2007), Cecilia (11 June

³ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

2007) and Eva (12 June 2007) pay their assistants for the entire week, whilst Lindiwe (18 June 2007) can only afford to pay a young boy to help her set up her goods each morning and evening. Full time help at work provides female traders with more flexibility in terms of meeting their domestic and work obligations. Isabella, for example, is able to take every Wednesday off to stay at home and catch up on her domestic chores. On Wednesdays, Isabella works at home in New Germany and only travels to Hill Street at 4pm to collect the day's earnings from her assistant (Isabella, 14 June 2007). Not only does paid help enable traders to manage their household responsibilities, but it also provides traders with more flexibility in terms of their work in the informal economy. Purchasing stock is made easier, for example, if a trader can afford to pay an assistant to watch over her stall and continue with business. Traders who are unable to afford to hire assistants, either at home or in their businesses, are forced to find alternative ways to manage their domestic and informal work obligations.

5.3.3 Family size and support

The size of individual households and the support that female traders are able to gain from their families also plays a role in their ability to cope with the demands of their domestic and informal work. Many female traders have children and husbands or partners who live with them at home.⁵ In these instances, female traders have additional domestic responsibilities. For example, traders who live with their families, such as Olivia (see Table 5.1), are responsible for preparing their children for school and their husbands for work each morning. Traders who live with their extended families also have additional cleaning and washing to do. Maria, for example, lives with her husband, their two daughters and her grandchild in Marianhill. During her interview, she complained of having to wash all of her grandchild's nappies before she could begin the rest of her family's washing (Maria, 18 June 2007). In larger households the burden of domestic chores is greater than in households where traders live alone, such as in Cecilia's case (see Table 5.1).

⁵ In this study four of the sixteen participants live alone (Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Jabu, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007). Two of the sixteen participants live with their partners (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007). Four of the sixteen participants live with their husbands / partners and their children (Busi, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007). The remaining six participants live with their children only (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Gertrude, 12 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

However, family members and dependants can also provide an important source of support to female traders. All of the participants in this study that live with their families receive some form of domestic assistance from family members. Daughters, and/ or female relatives, tend to help with the cooking, cleaning and other household chores. Ayanda's eight year old niece, for example, collects water for their home from the nearby communal tap and washes the dishes during the week (Ayanda, 11 June 2007). Isabella's mother takes care of her young children during the day and she also tends to the home vegetable garden (Isabella, 14 June 2007).

The empirical evidence for this study also reveals that some traders receive help with domestic chores from their sons and husbands or partners. Although not at the same scale as their female counterparts, sons and husbands or partners do share some of the domestic responsibilities. Six traders who were interviewed in this study live with their husbands or partners.⁵ Out of these six traders, five have partners or husbands that assist them with the everyday household chores. The partners of Dudu (12 June 2007), Francis (12 June 2007) and Gertrude (12 June 2007), help with some of the cooking and cleaning. Olivia's (18 June 2007) husband makes his bed and Marie's (18 June 2007) husband attends to the general maintenance of their home. Four of the traders that participated in this study also receive help from their sons. Lindiwe's (18 June 2007) eldest son, for example, is responsible for taking and collecting his youngest brother from crèche and for looking after him in the afternoons. Three traders' sons also do some of their own washing, particularly their socks and their underwear (Marie, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007; Olivia's, 18 June 2007).

Less family help is employed in assisting the participants with their informal work in Hill Street. Only in times of illness do these women ask family members to help them tend to their stalls (Jabu, 14 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007). Gertrude's (12 June 2007) niece sometimes looks after her stall if she travels to visit her family in Bizana in the Eastern Cape (Gertrude, 12 June 2007). Only Isabella is helped by a young female

⁵ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Dudu, 12 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007).

relative every Saturday. She does not pay her helper but rather buys her small presents occasionally (Isabella, 14 June 2007).

5.3.4 Access to support networks

Besides the help obtained from family networks, many female street traders also draw support from neighbours and friends in order to negotiate their different work activities effectively. The results of this study reveal that female street traders occasionally draw support from neighbours to assist with their domestic chores. Five of the participants in this study noted that they only help their neighbours at home with cooking and cleaning in times of death or illness.⁶ However, some traders help their neighbours out in different ways. Busi (11 June 2007), for example, sometimes lends her neighbours money for food or paraffin. Olivia (18 June 2007) shares her food with her neighbours and Francis (12 June 2007) helps her neighbours move their furniture when they are spring cleaning.

Drawing support from neighbours in the informal economy is more common. Many of the traders who were interviewed in this study have good relationships with their neighbouring traders in Hill Street and they help one another in various ways. In most cases, female street traders rely on their neighbours to watch over their goods and tend to their customers when they are away from their stalls. For example, half of the participants noted that they rely on their neighbours if they leave their stalls to go to the toilet, or to travel to purchase new stock. Such support is particularly important if the traders fall ill and are unable to trade (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007). Some traders, such as Eva (12 June 2007) and Hope (14 June 2007) also lend money to their neighbouring traders to help them replenish their stock.

Many traders cannot afford to hire help, nor do they have access to support from family and neighbours. For traders such as Gertrude (12 June 2007) and Phumzi (18 June 2007), who have small babies, lack of wealth and social support is a problem. Unable to afford childcare, and with no family or friends to care for their small children, Gertrude

⁶ (Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

and Phumzi bring their babies with them to work everyday. Caring for a small child at work makes trading more difficult, but for these women there is no other alternative.

5.3.5 Creative planning and time management

Another way in which female street traders manage their multiple tasks and responsibilities is through carefully managing their time. Most of the traders who were interviewed in this study manage their domestic chores so that general cleaning and washing can be done on a Sunday when they are not working in Hill Street. Some traders, such as Jabu (14 June 2007) and Nosipho (18 June 2007), wake up early in the morning to maximise the amount of time available for housework. Other traders, such as Hope (14 June 2007), Isabella (14 June 2007) and Olivia (18 June 2007), take care of their household chores in the evenings after they return home from their trade in Pinetown (see Table 5.1).

Eva and Lindiwe take planning and time management very seriously. Eva, for example, sets herself weekly goals to achieve in both her business and in her household. This helps her ensure that she is able to meet all her responsibilities successfully (Eva, 12 June 2007). Lindiwe explained that she is able to manage both her business and her household by sticking to a strict routine which involves arriving and leaving her informal work at the same times each day (Lindiwe, 18 June 2007).

5.4 Feelings and experiences at work at home and in the informal economy

From the above discussion it is evident that a range of factors impact on the vulnerability of traders and their ability to cope with their work demands. These factors not only influence the strategies adopted by female traders, but they also shape how these women experience their domestic and informal work. This section focuses on how the participants in this study feel about their diverse work activities, and the negotiation of these activities, between their homes and the informal economy.

5.4.1 Feelings and experiences of domestic work

The majority of the participants in this study enjoy completing their household chores. These women explained that they take pleasure in caring for their families and keeping their homes clean and tidy. Although almost half of this same group admitted that they find it difficult to manage their households and their businesses,⁷ personal satisfaction is obtained from keeping a clean and ordered household. Nosipho (18 June 2007), for example, takes great pride in the cleanliness of her home in Clermont and she mentioned that visitors often comment on her neatness. As she explained in her interview, *“I like a clean home more than anything”* (Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

Some female traders take a more neutral position regarding how they feel about completing their housework. In this study, Dudu (11 June 2007), Maria (18 June 2007) and Karabo (14 June 2007) explained that they accept their domestic responsibilities and are accustomed to tending to the household chores because of their gender. As Maria (18 June 2007) commented in her interview, *“I like all housework because I am a women”*.

However, there are other street traders who dislike undertaking their domestic chores. For example, Cecilia (11 June 2007) and Lindiwe (18 June 2007) explained that they dislike doing the housework because they find it too exhausting to find pleasurable. In this regard, the age, wealth and ability of individual traders to access support networks impacts on how they feel about and experience their domestic work.

5.4.2 Feelings and experiences of informal work

At the same time, most of the traders that participated in this study have mixed feelings regarding their informal work and mentioned both positive and negative experiences. Even those traders who are the most pleased and optimistic about their businesses noted that there were aspects of their work that they find stressful or unpleasant. Some traders presented a less positive view and explained that they dislike their informal work and work for survival only (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

⁷ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 11 June 2007).

With regard to the positive aspects of their informal work, the majority of the participants explained that they enjoy trading because it gives them financial independence. Running an informal business provides traders with the opportunity to earn a wage to support their families and dependants. Over half of the participants who were interviewed in this study are the sole breadwinners for the extended families. The remaining participants noted that they make a significant contribution to the combined monthly income of their households. Earning an income is thus crucial for the wellbeing of street traders and their dependants.

As a result, many traders are happy to be self employed and are proud of their business success. With regard to being self- employed, the women mostly enjoy being in charge of their businesses and their flexible working hours (Dudu, 14 June 2007; Hope 14 June 2007). In this respect, Dudu explained that she enjoys having the power to determine her working hours, giving her flexibility to stay at home or visit her family if a relative falls ill (Dudu, 12 June 2007). Other traders enjoy being self-employed because they feel that they earn more money than many people with formal jobs.⁸

Some traders take particular pride in their business success. In this study, five traders spoke of the growth of their businesses and their plans to expand their ventures.⁹ Isabella, for example, began brewing and selling home made beer to generate an income at the age of fourteen. The work was risky and Isabella described how she was often harassed by the police. After some time she decided to give up this business and instead trade in Hill Street (Isabella, 14 June 2007). Isabella began her street trading business twelve years ago before she had any children. At this stage in her life, her primary goal was to support her mother and her sister. Over the years her business has thrived and in her interview she explained that she is very proud of how far she has come and that she is able to support her family (Isabella, 14 June 2007). As Isabella (14 June 2007) noted, *“selling is in my bones”*.

⁸ (Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope 14 June 2007; Isabella 18 June 2007).

⁹ (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

Besides earning an income and managing a successful business, many traders enjoy working outside of home in the city.¹⁰ Busi, Francis and Lindiwe, for example, described the monotony of domestic work and stressed how much they enjoyed getting out of the house. In their individual interviews, Busi (11 June 2007) noted that, “*at home your mind can turn to stone*”. Similarly, Lindiwe (18 June 2007) explained that “*it is boring to stay in the house*”. Working in the city also provides female street traders with the opportunity to meet a variety of people and have a diversity of experiences. Many of the traders who were interviewed in this study commented that they enjoy their work in the city because it allows them to communicate with different people,¹¹ make new friends,¹² develop their people skills¹³ and open their minds to new ideas.¹⁴ As Maria (18 June 2007) explained in her interview, “*my work keeps my mind open*”.

However, female street traders also face a number of difficulties in running their businesses. Firstly, their experiences are influenced by their poor working conditions. The traders who were interviewed in this study complained about the dust, dirt and the little protection they have against the heat and the rain in Hill Street. Transporting their stock to and from their storage facilities each day is another major concern,¹⁵ as is the level of crime in the area. Criminals target female traders and other traders sometimes steal goods from their neighbours out of the storage facilities.¹⁶ Many of the participants in this study also complained about the poor service that they receive from the local Municipality. Rising permit prices¹⁷ and poorly situated trading sites were the greatest concerns. Hope, Nosipho and Phumzi explained that the Municipality had not consulted them regarding which trading site they would prefer and they were allocated sites on quiet stretches of road. This impacts negatively on their daily sales and as a result

¹⁰ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007; Gertrude, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007).

¹¹ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007).

¹² (Gertrude, 12 June 2007).

¹³ (Maria, 18 June 2007).

¹⁴ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007).

¹⁵ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

¹⁶ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007).

¹⁷ (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Jabu, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007).

Nosipho (18 June 2007) and Phumzi (14 June 2007) often take their goods and try to sell them illegally on the opposite stretch on road which is busier.

Street traders are also often harassed by passers-by. In this respect, Cecilia (11 June 2007) and Dudu (12 June 2007) noted that often drunk passers-by harass them and knock over their stock. Six of the traders also described how the public insult them because of the type of work that they engage in.¹⁸ Ayanda (11 June 2007) and Busi (11 June 2007) explained that some people view trading on the street to be degrading because it shows that the trader is somebody who is poor and desperate for money. The insults from the public are hurtful, although Lindiwe explained that when passers-by insult her she does not get upset. Instead she explained that they “*have lost the meaning*”, because she believes that she makes more money than many employed people (Lindiwe, 18 June 2007).

It is not only the general public that can make trading in Hill Street unpleasant. The majority of the women in this study also described problems that they face with other users of their market space, both traders and non-traders. Dudu, for example, described how singers often set up their speakers in the vacant site next to hers to entertain the public for money. All day long they play loud music and crowds gather around her table. The loud music makes it difficult to talk to potential customers and the crowds sometimes steal or damage her stock (Dudu, 12 June 2007).

Other traders can also make work in Hill Street difficult. Eva and Maria have had particularly bad experiences. Eva explained that her neighbouring traders are jealous of the success of her business and in the past they have used *muti* against her.¹⁹ She described how once she suffered from strong headaches and felt faint as a result of the *muti*. She had to go home and could not attend to her stall that day (Eva, 12 June 2007). Maria has also experienced problems with the other traders in Hill Street, who she argues are also jealous of her success. Maria explained that she used to store her stock in the same place as many of the other traders in the area. Soon she began to notice that

¹⁸ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Gertrude, 12 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 Jun2 2007).

¹⁹ *Muti* is traditional Zulu medicine that can be used in black magic.

only her goods were being stolen from the storage facility. Eventually Maria called the police who caught one of her neighbouring traders stealing some of her stock. Maria explained that because of this incident she was not on good terms with any of her neighbours (Maria, 18 June 2007). Soon after the incident some of the others traders began spreading rumours that she was stealing stock from the storage containers and selling it outside of the Chatsworth hospital.²⁰ The rumours became so persuasive that eventually the Municipality phoned the police to investigate. Despite the fact that the police had found nothing, the Municipality revoked her permit. This incident affected Maria badly and she had to stop trading in Hill Street for a year. After a year Maria got her permit back and she began trading again (Maria, 18 June 2007).

Finally, many traders find that the stress of being self-employed influences their experiences of informal work experiences negatively. Informal street trading is difficult and traders are unlikely to generate a consistent income. The stress of having to provide for their dependants in a business where their income fluctuates is of concern to the female traders who were interviewed in this study (Hope, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007). Other traders complained of the small income that can be generated from street trading.²¹ Juggling domestic and informal work responsibilities can also be difficult. The following section explores how female street traders experience the task of co-ordinating their different work activities across time and space.

5.4.3 Feelings and experiences of co-ordinating multiple work activities

Over half of the participants who were interviewed in this study explained that they do not find it difficult to manage their domestic and informal work responsibilities. The reasons that this group of traders provided to explain why they managed so well were varied. The majority of the traders in this group cited that they were able to manage their multiple tasks by carefully planning their time.²² Other traders described different factors which enable them to manage their different work tasks from day to day. Dudu

²⁰ Chatsworth is located south of Durban.

²¹ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June).

²² (Eva, 12 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Jabu, 14 June, 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

(12 June 2007), for example, finds juggling multiple tasks on a daily basis manageable because her partner helps her with the domestic chores. Gertrude (12 June 2007), Hope (14 June 2007) and Karabo (14 June 2007) enjoy being busy and thus find it easy to manage both their homes and their businesses. As Karabo (14 June 2007) noted in her interview, *“I am not a lazy women”*. Four of the women also noted that they are accustomed to managing both their households and their businesses and that under the circumstances they accept that they have to act as both homemakers and breadwinners.²³ Francis (12 June 2007) and Karabo (14 June 2007), for example, explained that they do not find undertaking their different work tasks difficult because they are accustomed to multi-tasking.

On the other hand, six of the female traders explained that they find it difficult to manage both their households and their businesses.²⁴ Age plays a role in this regard, as five of the eight participants that are over thirty-five years of age complained that they found it difficult to co-ordinate their different work tasks.²⁵ Other traders noted that they find it difficult to manage their different work tasks because the work load is exhausting.²⁶ Female street traders work long hours with little time off. Finally, Busi commented that she finds it difficult to discipline her children because she is away from home most of the day. Busi explained that she often suffers from headaches from trying to deal with her children’s problems and trying to keep them disciplined (Busi, 11 June 2007).

5.5 Conclusion

In contemporary South Africa many impoverished women have moved out of their private ‘home’ spaces to enter the ‘public’ spaces of the informal economy. As women, female street traders are tasked with both managing their businesses and maintaining

²³ (Francis, 12 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007).

²⁴ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

²⁵ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Olivia 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

²⁶ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007).

their households. Section 5.2 discusses the nature of the work engaged in by female street traders. The empirical data reveals that female traders engage in a diversity of activities, both at home and in the informal economy. Many street traders are the sole breadwinners for their extended families and are primarily responsible for tending to their domestic chores. As a result, female traders work long hours with little leisure time for themselves.

Working between and across their 'home' and 'informal work' spaces is difficult and female traders employ a range of strategies in order to negotiate their different work activities on a daily basis. The strategies employed differ in relation to individual life circumstances. In particular, the age, wealth and ability of individuals to access to social networks impact on the vulnerability of traders and influences the strategies that they adopt. Creativity and initiative also, however, play a role. In order to successfully manage their different work responsibilities, some female traders plan and manage their time strategically. These issues are discussed in Section 5.3.

Exploring the different activities engaged in, and the different strategies employed, is important in order to contextualise the work experiences of female street traders. Section 5.4 examines how female street traders experience and feel about their work in their 'home' and 'informal work' spaces. The discussion reveals a diversity of positive and negative work experiences. At home, some female traders enjoy taking care of their households, whilst other traders find their domestic chores a burden. Similarly, in the informal economy female traders have both positive and negatives experiences as they interact with the public and engage in a variety of social and economic relations. How female traders feel about their work, and the negotiation of their multiple responsibilities, varies. The age and life circumstances of individual traders shapes their feelings and experiences.

This chapter aims to describe the diversity of activities and experiences that characterise the everyday working realities of female street traders. Chapter Six draws from this discussion in order to explore the meanings that female traders attach to their domestic and informal work spaces, wherein these experiences take place. Because of the

mutually constitutive relationship between notions of space and gendered identities, it is important to reflect on the meanings that female traders attach to their work spaces (Massey 1994, 2005a, McDowell, 1999). Through their everyday work, female traders forge connections across and between the public / private spatial divide. This movement has implications for how these women both conceptualise their work spaces and how they define themselves. The following chapter investigates how female traders construct their 'home' and 'informal work' spaces in relation to their diverse work experiences. Chapter Seven explores the identities of female street traders at work.

Chapter Six

Work spaces

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the meanings that female street traders attach to their domestic and informal work spaces. Working in both public and private spaces, these women construct different notions of ‘home’ and ‘work’. The theoretical framework highlights the engendered nature of western spatial binaries, such as the space/place and public/private dualisms. These binaries are hierarchical, whereby public space is privileged and encoded masculine and the private place of home is thought to embody feminine characteristics (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994; McDowell and Massey, 1996; McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). In their research, feminist geographers have sought to subvert these spatial binaries, by exposing the diverse and contradictory ways in which public and private spaces are experienced and conceptualised. These scholars argue that spatial concepts are socially constructed and are thus dynamic and contingent (Massey, 1995; McDowell, 1997, 2004; Bondi and Christie, 2003).

Drawing on the theoretical framework, this chapter explores the multiple ways in which female street traders conceptualise their work spaces in the public and private spheres. The data reveals that female traders attach a variety of both positive and negative meanings to their work spaces. Section 6.2 and 6.3 explore the meanings that female traders attach to their home and informal work spaces respectively. In examining these meanings it is important to reflect on the work experiences of female traders, because these experiences shape how these women construct notions of ‘home’ and ‘work’ space. The data reveals that whilst some of the ways in which these women construct their work spaces reinforce conventional engendered notions of ‘home’ and ‘work’ space, others effectively challenge the gender of these spaces.

The analysis in this chapter is based on the data that was obtained from the auto-photography task that was undertaken in this study. Six female street traders participated in this task, whereby they were given disposable cameras and asked to

photograph their 'home' and 'informal work' spaces. The women were asked to categorise their photographs under two themes, namely 'heaviness and hardship' and 'happiness and strength'. Each woman was then interviewed to discuss and explain the photographs that she had taken. The interpretation of the photographs in this chapter is structured around the two above mentioned themes.

Examining how female traders conceptualise their domestic and informal work spaces is important in understanding the identities that these women construct in relation to their work experiences. The literature review draws attention to the intimate connection between notions of space, place and gender. Feminist geographers argue that how space is conceptualised matters to the production and reproduction of gendered identities (Massey, 1994, 2005; McDowell, 1999). Thus Chapter Seven draws from the discussion presented in this chapter to explore how female street traders define themselves in relation to their work.

6.2 Meanings attached to the home space

Female street traders attach a variety of meanings to their domestic work spaces. The literature review argues that concepts of 'home' are socially constructed and that 'home' may mean different things to different people (McDowell, 1997; Domosh and Seager, 2001). This argument is supported by the empirical evidence in this study, which reveals multiple, contradictory understandings of the home space. Furthermore, it is evident that the work experiences of female street traders influence the meanings that they attach to their domestic work spaces. As these women move between engendered public and private space, they are both challenging and reproducing the conventional ways in which space is conceptualised. The first part of this section discusses the positive ways in which female traders construct their domestic work spaces. Section 6.2.2 then explores some of the negative ways in which the home space is conceptualised.

6.2.1 Happiness and strength in the home space

The majority female street traders in this study are proud of their homes. Earning an income in the informal economy shapes how these women conceptualise their home spaces. Approximately half the sample has been able to purchase their own houses using the money that they have generated from their trade.¹ Busi is one such example. Busi has built a house for herself in Kwadabeka,² as well as building a house for her family in Ixopo³ (Busi, 11 June 2007). Similarly, Hope lives in her own home in Kwadengezi⁴ and she has managed to build a home in Stanger for her mother and daughter (Hope, 14 June 2007). Other traders use their income to renovate and extend onto their houses. Lindiwe, for example, owns a house in Marianhill which originally only had two bedrooms. Using money that she saved from her business, Lindiwe has built two extra bedrooms and she has paid to install electricity and piped water inside her home (Lindiwe, 18 June 2007). Not only have female traders purchased and renovated their homes using their income, but they also been able to furnish their homes and buy a variety of appliances to make their homes more comfortable. Traders buy assets such as televisions, radios, telephones and DVD players.

Plate 5.1 and 5.2 below are photographs that were taken by Dudu and Isabella respectively. Dudu is a business woman who is proud of her success. Over time she has managed to secure regular customers and in the future she hopes to expand her business. At present, Dudu sells a much wider variety of goods than when she began her business in 2000 (Dudu, 12 June 2007). Similarly, Isabella is also a proud business woman whose business has thrived over time (Isabella, 14 June 2007). The two photographs below show the inside of both participants' homes and the appliances that they have bought to furnish their houses. In describing their photographs, both Dudu and Isabella stressed how pleased they are to be able to afford to buy material goods for their homes (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007). Dudu's photograph shows her TV, DVD player, large sound system and fridge. Isabella's photograph depicts her modest kitchen

¹ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

² Kwadabeka is a formal township that is located to the north east of Pinetown (see figure 3).

³ Many urban dwellers in South African cities have migrated from rural areas in the country. In these instances, these people maintain strong ties to their ancestral homes in these rural regions.

⁴ Kwadengezi is located to the west of Pinetown (see figure 3).

equipped with a small oven and a microwave. Owning a home, furnishing it and stocking it with expensive appliances as these two women have done, illustrates the success of individual traders as both business women and homemakers. For these traders, home is a *place of pride* that represents their achievements.



Plate 5.1: Inside Dudu's home in Clermont



Plate 5.2: Inside Isabella's kitchen in New Germany

The female street traders in this study also take pride in their ability to provide for their children and dependants. The home space is once again a *space of pride* where they are able to meet the needs of their families. Plate 5.3 is a photograph that was taken of Busi.

Busi lives in her own home in Kwadabeka with her husband and their five children. Her earnings provide a vital contribution to the combined monthly income of their household. Busi enjoys running her own business because it enables her to put food on the table and pay for her children to get an education. For example, she is currently paying for her second eldest daughter to study to become an AIDS counsellor (Busi, 11 June 2007). In Plate 5.3 Busi is seen feeding her two daughters on the couch in their home. In the picture Busi looks at her daughter proudly as she physically puts food in her child's mouth. Busi (2 July 2007) explained that she took this photograph to emphasise how happy she is to *"have the chance to feed her children"*. By posing in the picture literally putting food in her child's mouth, Busi emphasises her role as a mother and a provider. Trading in Hill Street makes it possible for her to fulfill her dual roles as a caregiver and breadwinner.



Plate 5.3: Busi feeding two of her daughters

Plate 5.4 is a photograph that was taken by Isabella who lives in her own home in New Germany with her mother and her four children. She is the sole provider for her household as her mother is retired and does not earn an income (Isabella, 14 June 2007). Isabella's photograph shows her children standing outside their home. In the photograph, Isabella's mother is standing in the doorway holding her youngest child. Isabella explained that she took this photograph to show how happy her children are. This is evident in the picture whereby her children are happily smiling. In describing her

photograph, Isabella noted that it brings her great joy to earn an income to be able to provide for her family. Isabella's children love the breakfast cereal 'Weetbix', for example, and it makes her happy to be able to buy this cereal for her children when they ask for it (Isabella, 5 July 2007). Like Busi, Isabella's home also represents a *space of pride*.



Plate 5.4: Isabella's children standing outside their home in New Germany

Many women draw pride and construct a sense of self in relation to their home spaces. Previously confined to the private sphere, women's identities as caregivers and homemakers were primarily expressed through the management and decoration of their homes (Domosh and Seager, 2001). As discussed in Chapter Five, the empirical data reveals that the majority of the participants take pride in caring for their families and keeping their homes clean and attractive. For many traders, however, an attractive home is also one that is furnished and comfortable. Similarly, being a successful caregiver also means ensuring that your dependants' needs are met. Research on street trading in Durban indicates that many female traders are the sole breadwinners in their households and have children and relatives that rely on the income that is earned (Lund et al., 2000). In order to furnish their homes and provide for their dependants, these women generate an income from their survivalist enterprises. Thus for female street traders, such as Dudu and Isabella, their home spaces are conceptualised as a reflection of their roles as both successful business women and successful homemakers. By constructing

notions of home that reflect their roles as breadwinners, female traders are challenging conventional ways in which the home space is conceptualised.

The home is also a *space of love*. Many female traders are mothers and wives, partners and caregivers to their dependants. Their love for their families makes home a place of ‘happiness and strength’ for many female street traders. Plate 5.5 below shows Maria relaxed and embracing her granddaughter on a couch in their living room. Maria lives in Marianhill with her husband, their two daughters and her granddaughter. Her income is vital to the survival of their household. Maria explained that she had this photograph taken to show how much she loves her granddaughter, who “*is always well*” (Maria, 2 July 2007). Maria (2 July 2007) mentioned that it saddens her that her daughter is not home more often to care for the child, but despite this her granddaughter brings great joy to their home. From Maria’s happy smile and warm embrace that is evident in the image, it is apparent that she loves her grandchild deeply.



Plate 5.5: Maria and her granddaughter in their living room at home in Marianhill

For Dudu, her home is also a *space of love* because of her supportive partner. Dudu lives with her partner in Clermont. Plate 5.6 shows Dudu’s partner helping with the ironing. Because Dudu works long hours trading in Hill Street, she is unable to attend to all the household chores. As a result her partner relieves her of some of her domestic responsibilities (Dudu, 27 June 2007). Dudu (27 June 2007) explained that she is happy

and proud of her partner who helps her with the household chores in their home. Dudu (27 June 2007) noted that most men are not prepared “*to do the work of a woman*”, but that her partner is an exception and she loves him very much.



Plate 5.6: Dudu’s partner helping with the ironing in their home in Clermont

The literature reviews draws attention to the conventional ways in which the home is conceptualised. Feminist geographers point out that notions of home and domestic space are still linked to popular definitions of womanhood and femininity (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). As such the home space is thought to embody stereotypical feminine characteristics of familial love, emotion and support, and it is assumed that it is the woman’s role to maintain the home and all that it symbolises (McDowell, 1999; Mitchell, 2000; Domosh and Seager, 2001). The empirical data in this study both supports and challenges traditional notions of ‘home’. The empirical evidence reveals that through their roles as caregivers and their domestic interactions with their family members, female traders reproduce conventional notions of home as a

space of love. This is evident in Maria's photograph which depicts her as a proud caregiver to her grandchild. However, the data also reveals that gender relations in the home space are changing as these women work full-time in the informal economy. In order to successfully manage their household, Dudu's partner takes on "*the work of a woman*" and helps with the domestic chores. In Chapter Five it is evident that many other traders also receive help around the home from their male spouses and dependants. These interactions at home shape the meanings that female traders attach to their home spaces. Thus for traders such as Dudu, the home is conceptualised as a *space of love* because of the actions of her partner, which contradict conventional gender roles and relations in domestic space.

6.2.2 Heaviness and hardship in the home space

As discussed in Chapter Five, female street traders have the joint responsibility of managing their businesses and running their households. In order to provide for their dependants, female traders work long hours to generate a small income. Because female traders trade outside of their homes for most of the day, meeting their domestic responsibilities can be challenging. How female traders cope with their dual roles, and experience their work in their different work spaces, depends on the life circumstances of individual traders. From the discussion in Chapter Five it is evident that although many female traders take pride in keeping their homes clean and tidy, housework can also be exhausting. Unsurprisingly then, the home may be conceptualised as a *space of hard work*. The following three photographs illustrate this sentiment of the home space.

Plate 5.7 is a photograph that Dudu took of her dishes to represent 'heaviness and hardship' in her home space. Dudu lives with her partner in Clermont. She is the sole provider for her two children who live with her family in Lusikisiki. Although her partner sometimes helps with the domestic chores, Dudu is primarily responsible for managing the household responsibilities (Dudu, 12 June 2007). In describing her photograph, Dudu explained that she washes her dishes in the mornings and on the weekends. Dudu finds this task tiresome, especially in the mornings when she has to wash up before leaving for Hill Street (Dudu, 27 June 2007). Thus for Dudu, her home is a *space of hard work*.



Plate 5.7: Dudu's dishes at her home in Clermont

The next photograph (Plate 5.8) shows Busi working in her home garden where she grows spinach and bananas to sell in Hill Street. In this photograph, Busi indicated that she is pulling out the weeds in her garden. The work looks exhausting and in describing this photograph, Busi (2 July 2007) explained that she finds cultivating her garden difficult. Not only does Busi not have much time to work in the garden because of her busy schedule, but gardening is also physically strenuous. Because she is old and her knees are weak, Busi finds it physically exhausting to keep her garden healthy (Busi, 2 July 2007).



Plate 5.8: Busi pulling out weeds in her home garden in Kwadabeka

Phumzi also conceptualises her home as a *space of hard work*. Phumzi lives in Clermont with her son, four grandchildren and three foster children. She is the sole provider for all of her dependants. Only Phumzi's eldest foster daughter is old enough to help with the domestic chores at home. Phumzi is thus primarily responsible for both providing for her dependants and managing their household. Because of Phumzi's age and physical ailments, housework is difficult and physically strenuous (Phumzi, 18 June 2007). The photograph presented below (Plate 5.9) shows Phumzi hanging up her babies' nappies. In the picture Phumzi looks glum and she explained that she finds completing the household chores difficult because she suffers from arthritis. Washing clothing in cold water hurts her hands. Because Phumzi has fostered two baby boys, she has the additional responsibility of washing the babies' nappies (Phumzi, 2 July 2007).



Plate 5.9: Phumzi hanging up her family's washing at home in Clermont

Besides being conceptualised as a *space of hard work*, the 'home' can be also constructed in a multitude of other ways. For example, in this study some of the participants took photographs which depicted their homes as spaces that they associate with anxiety, unhappiness and abuse. Their experiences in their home spaces shapes

how these women construct notions of 'home'. As mentioned previously, many female street traders are the sole providers for their extended families. This is a great responsibility that is often stressful for the women. Trading in the informal economy does not generate a large income and the amount of money earned often fluctuates (Lund et al., 2000). Making ends meet in a low paying job is stressful and for Isabella and Phumzi home is also a *space of anxiety*. Plate 5.10 is a photograph of Phumzi and her children outside of their home in Kwadengezi. Phumzi explained that she had this photograph taken to show how many children she has to feed and support. Phumzi is the sole provider for her extended family and she receives no other income from family members or from state grants (Phumzi, 18 June 2007). In describing her photograph, Phumzi explained how difficult it is to support so many children on her own and she realises that if she does not trade these children will go to bed hungry. Being the sole provider for her extended family is stressful for Phumzi, who explained that the struggle for survival makes her unhappy (Phumzi, 2 July 2007). In this photograph Phumzi looks concerned about her situation.



Plate 5.10: Phumzi and her family outside their home in Kwadengezi

Furthermore, earning a small and inconsistent income prevents female traders from being able to purchase material goods that they want for themselves and their children. Thus for many traders, home is also a *space of unhappiness*. Isabella and Phumzi, for example, took photographs that illustrate their poverty and the poor condition of their

houses. Plate 5.11 is a photograph that shows the inside of Phumzi's home and two of her children. When describing this photograph, Phumzi pointed out the bare rooms and explained that she is saddened by the poor state of her home. Phumzi (2 July 2007) mentioned that she would like to buy furniture and appliances, like a television, for example, and that it makes her upset that she is unable to furnish her home as other people can. Phumzi stated that unfortunately she cannot afford to buy anything for her household, because all of her money is spent on food for herself and her children (Phumzi, 2 July 2007).



Plate 5.11: Inside Phumzi's home in Kwadengezi

Isabella's photograph (Plate 5.12) shows her two children standing outside of their home in New Germany. In describing this photograph, Isabella pointed out her daughter's white pajamas (Isabella, 5 July 2007). She explained that she has befriended a white neighbour in her area who gives her clothing for her children, such as these pajamas. Isabella explained that it makes her sad when she is unable to adequately provide for her children. She lamented that when business is slow, she earns just enough money to buy her children bread so that they do not have to go to bed hungry (Isabella, 5 July 2007).



Plate 5.12: Isabella's two children outside their home in New Germany

Finally, home can also be conceptualised as a *space of abuse*. Plate 5.13 shows Eva's two daughters holding up a photograph of Eva's ex-partner with their youngest daughter. Eva (27 June 2007) explained that she took this photograph of her daughters and their father to illustrate the hardship and difficulties that this man has caused herself and her family. The grim expressions on the children's faces reflect their feelings about their father. Eva (27 June 2007) explained that she and her partner split up five years ago because he was physically and emotionally abusive. Eva recollected some of the terrible things that her ex-partner had done to her. Her ex-partner had many girlfriends and on one occasion he arrived at their home in Clermont with another woman and asked Eva to leave the house so that he could have sex with this woman (Eva, 27 June 2007). Eva also described how her ex-partner used to shout at her and beat her in front of their children. On another occasion, Eva's ex-partner took all of her clothes and burnt them. After five years these incidents still affect Eva and her children badly. Eva (27 June 2007) explained that she is unhappy about what happened in the past because her two daughters had witnessed the terrible things that her ex-partner had done to her.



Plate 5.13: Eva's daughters holding a photograph of their father

The empirical evidence reveals that female street traders construct their home spaces in multiple and often contradictory ways. How female traders construct their domestic work spaces is thus subjective and is shaped by their individual experiences at home. For example, female traders work hard to fulfil their domestic responsibilities and they carry the stress of providing for their families. In some cases, female traders are also physically abused within their homes (Eva, 12 June 2007). These experiences play a role in how these women construct the home space as a space of hard work, anxiety, unhappiness and abuse. These multiple constructs of 'home' support the literature that argues that notions of 'home' are socially constructed (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). As such, the engendered qualities associated with 'home' as a feminine space are similarly called into question. As mentioned previously, conventional concepts of 'home' evoke notions of a safe, loving space, a refuge from the world of work in the public sphere (McDowell, 1999; Mitchell, 2000; Domosh and Seager, 2001). However, the data presented in this section challenges these traditional views of the home space. The following section explores the meanings that female street traders attach to their informal work spaces in Hill Street.

6.3 Meanings attached to informal work spaces

This section reveals the variety of ways in which female street traders construct their informal work spaces in Pinetown. The multiple constructions of the public sphere are largely shaped by the diverse work experiences of these women. The literature review argues that the public/private spatial binary is engendered. According to the literature, private space is encoded feminine and public space is typically associated with masculine characteristics, such as activity, risk and excitement (McDowell, 1997). Traditional men would enter the public realm in order to earn a wage to support their families. Women, on the other hand, would stay at home in the private sphere, which is commonly accepted as ‘a woman’s place’ (Domosh and Seager, 2001). In this study the empirical evidence reveals that as female traders work across and between the public/private divide, they are effectively challenging conventional ways in which public space is conceived. This section explores the positive and negative ways in which female street traders conceptualise their informal work spaces, in light of the theoretical framework.

6.3.1 Happiness and strength in informal work spaces

The empirical evidence reveals that informal work spaces can be both spaces of pride and of positive social interaction. Trading in the informal economy can be difficult, but despite these difficulties many traders conceptualise their informal work space as a *space of pride*. Female street traders are proud of their businesses for a number of different reasons. As discussed in Chapter Five, the majority of female traders are proud of being self-employed and making their own money. Many traders are also passionate about their trade and watching their businesses expand.¹ In the explanations of the photographs that were taken for this study by the participants, four women expressed that they gain satisfaction from seeing their stock set up neatly at their stalls.²

¹ (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

² (Dudu, 27 June 2007; Eva, 27 June 2007; Isabella, 5 July 2007; Maria, 2 July 2007; Phumzi, 2 July 2007).

Plate 5.14 below shows Eva standing next to her stall in Hill Street. Eva explained that she had someone take this photograph of herself showing off her goods so that she could illustrate how happy proud she is of her business (Eva, 12 June 2007). In the photograph Eva is smiling as she gestures to her goods that are neatly arranged on her table. She is proud of her business success and believes that she is successful because she knows how to treat her customers. Eva's mother was also a business woman, in a similar trade, and she taught Eva how to handle difficult people. Because Eva understands people and business, she believes that she is able to earn more money than most people employed in the formal economy (Eva, 12 June 2007).

Plate 5.15 is a photograph of Dudu's stall in Hill Street. In explaining her photograph, Dudu (12 June 2007) noted that although she does not enjoy setting up her stock every day, she does like to see her goods neatly organised on her table. Dudu stated that she puts a great deal of effort into how she arranges her stock so that she can attract customers (Dudu, 12 June 2007). The photograph below shows an abundance of different items stacked attractively on her table.



Plate 5.14: Eva and her stall in Hill Street



Plate 5.15: Dudu's table in Hill Street

The majority of female traders stated that they enjoy working outside of home because it provides them with an opportunity to meet different people (see Section 5.4.2).³ For these traders, the informal economy is also a *space of positive social interaction*. Plate 5.16 was taken by Phumzi and it shows a birthday party held in a store in Hill Street. In the centre of the photograph is the owner of the store, his wife and their young son who celebrated his birthday. Because Phumzi cannot afford child care, she brings her small baby to work with her each day (Phumzi, 18 June 2007). On this particular day, Phumzi's friend, who works in the store, invited her child to this birthday party. Phumzi (18 June 2007) explained that she has made many friends in Hill Street and that she was happy that they were invited to the celebration.

³ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Francis, 12 June 2007; Gertrude, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007).



Plate 5.16: A birthday party in Hill Street

6.3.2 Heaviness and hardship in informal work spaces

Female street traders construct multiple meanings of both their home and informal work spaces. The participants expressed their 'heaviness and hardship' in Hill Street by taking photographs that depict their informal work spaces as spaces of hard work, conflict, danger, anxiety and hardship. Street trading in the informal economy can be difficult and female traders are confronted with a number of challenges at work on a daily basis. In Chapter Five the work experiences of female street traders are described and some of the difficulties that these women experience in their informal work are highlighted. Poor work conditions and conflict with other traders emerge as key factors that make street trading in Hill Street difficult and unpleasant. Many of the photographs taken in this study reflect these same negative experiences. How female traders experience their trade in the informal economy shapes how they conceptualise their informal work spaces. Whether in conflict or celebration, their social interaction and experience in engendered public space influences how these women conceptualise their work spaces in Hill Street. Notions of public space as an essentially masculine space are called into question as these women move out of home to work for a wage (McDowell and Massey, 1996; Bondi and Christie, 2003; McDowell, 2004; Pratt, 2005).

Work in the informal economy can be exhausting. Thus for many female traders the informal economy is a *space of hard work*. Carrying heavy loads of stock to and from

storage each day is particularly strenuous. For older traders this is more of a burden. Depending on what is traded, stock can be heavy and awkward to carry. In Hill Street the traffic volumes are high and transporting stock across busy roads can also be dangerous. Plate 5.17 below shows Busi pushing a supermarket trolley full of bags of potatoes across a busy road to her trading site. She uses this trolley to transport her fruit and vegetables to and from her storage container each day (Busi, 11 June 2007). In describing this photograph, Busi explained that she gets very tired pushing this trolley because her stock is heavy, especially the 10kg bags of potatoes. Because of the weight of these potatoes, Busi is only able to carry three bags at a time. Making multiple trips between her storage facility and her stall takes time each morning and afternoon. The fact that Busi is old and she has weak knees makes this task more of a burden (Busi, 11 June 2007).



Plate 5.17: Busi transporting her stock to her trading site in Hill Street

Plate 5.18 shows Dudu carrying her table from her storage facility to her trading site in Hill Street in the early morning. In describing this photograph, Dudu complained that

she does not like to carry this table because it is heavy and awkward. In bad weather the wood gets wet which makes the table even heavier (Dudu, 12 June 2007).



Plate 5.18: Dudu carrying table to her trading site in Hill Street

For many female street traders, the informal economy is also a *space of conflict*. Some traders experience conflict with other traders because of malicious gossip and jealousy (Eva, 12 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007). Section 5.4.2 describes the experiences of Eva and Maria, both of whom have been in conflict with their fellow traders in Hill Street in the past. In Plate 5.19 Eva represents her negative experience. The photograph shows the stall of Eva's neighbour in Hill Street. When describing this photograph, Eva (12, June 2007) pointed out that she has problems with the two women who trade at this site because they are jealous of her success. These women take note of which items of Eva's are selling well and then they purchase the same items and try to sell them cheaper than Eva does. This makes trading difficult for Eva, who explained that it is hard to trade next to traders who sell the same goods as you do (Eva, 12 June 2007). From this photograph it is evident that Eva's neighbours sell the same towels, facecloths

and toiletries as Eva. When comparing this photograph to the photograph of Eva and her stall (Plate 5.14) the similarity between the traders' stock is apparent.



Plate 5.19: Eva's neighbour in Hill Street

The majority of traders also experience problems with other people who share the informal market space in Hill Street, such as passers-by and public musicians and entertainers. For these traders, the informal economy is also a *space of conflict*. The next two photographs were taken by Dudu and Eva respectively (Plate 5.20 and Plate 5.21). Dudu's photograph shows a crowd that has gathered around her stall to listen to local musicians. As described in Section 5.4.2, Dudu often experiences conflict with local musicians who play loud music and cause many people to crowd around her stall. She complained that these crowds disturb her stock and sometimes knock her goods on to the floor (Dudu, 12 June 2007). In this photograph, Dudu's table is visible in the bottom right-hand corner surrounded by the public. Dudu commented that if she tries to chase the people who are watching the show, they fight back and insult her (Dudu, 12 June 2007).



Plate 5.20: Crowds gather around Dudu's stall in Hill Street

Eva is not happy with some of the entertainers who perform close to her stall either. Plate 5.21 shows a magician standing in a white shirt, who has a large snake wrapped around his shoulders. He is performing magic for the public in Hill Street (Eva, 12 June 2007). In describing this photograph, Eva (12, June 2007) pointed out that if you watch this magician and you do not donate money to him, he will use his magic against you. Because Eva is afraid of magic and snakes, she does not like having these sorts of entertainers near her (Eva, 12 June 2007).



Plate 5.21: A magician performing for the public in Hill Street

The informal economy is also a *space of danger* for many female traders. Crime and sexual harassment are major concerns for female street traders. According to Busi (11 June 2007), criminals target female street traders on their way home from work. The women are often harassed at the taxi ranks and their daily income is stolen. To overcome this problem, Busi hides her money in her fruit and vegetables and leaves it in her storage facility in Hill Street until she can get to a bank to deposit the money (Busi, 11 June 2007). The storage facilities themselves are unsafe, however, and many traders have their goods stolen out of these facilities by other traders.¹ Not only has some of Busi's stock been stolen in the past, but she has also witnessed many incidents of crime on the street (Busi, 11 June 2007).

The photograph below (Plate 5.22) was taken by Eva. In this photograph Eva identified the man dressed in white as a local thief. Eva explained that there is a gang of thieves who operate regularly in Hill Street, pick pocketing and mugging people in the area. Although Eva is able to identify these criminals, she explained that she is too afraid to report them to the police (Eva, 12 June 2007). Not only is the informal economy a *space of danger* for female street traders because of the crime, but also because of sexual harassment. Karabo (14, June 2007) described how men harass the female traders by "*saying funny things*" to them. Although this may upset many women, Karabo explained that she is not worried about these men because she is willing to fight them if she needs to (Karabo, 14 June 2007).

¹ (Ayanda, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007).



Plate 5.22: A local thief identified by Eva in Hill Street

As discussed in Section 5.4.2, street trading can also be a stressful business. As survivalist enterprise owners, street traders work long hours and generate a limited income (Lund et al., 2000). When business is slow, street traders are unable to purchase new stock or provide for their families. For these reasons some female traders conceptualise their informal work space as a *space of anxiety*. Plate 5.23 shows a photograph that was taken of Isabella sitting near her stall in Hill Street. Isabella (14 June, 2007) explained that she had this photograph taken of herself without her stock to represent the times when business is slow and she is unable to replenish her goods. She recalled one particular period when she was forced to stay at home for two months because she did not have sufficient funds to replenish her stock (Isabella, 14 June 2007). In the photograph Isabella looks concerned. By constructing a photograph of herself sitting alone without her trade, Isabella captures the sense of sorrow and hopelessness that she feels when business is slow and she cannot earn an income.



Plate 5.23: Isabella sitting near her stall in Hill Street

Finally, many of the female street traders that participated in this study are unhappy about the physical conditions of work in Hill Street. Traders are exposed to the elements and many do not have shelter from the rain or the sun. The informal market in Hill Street is also under-served, with inadequate sanitation facilities for local workers (Participant A, 6 June 2007). The majority of the participants in this study complained about their working conditions and the failure of the Municipality to meet their needs. For many traders their informal work space is also a *space of hardship*. Section 5.4.2 describes how Phumzi is unhappy with the site that she has been allocated by the Municipality because it is located on a quiet stretch of road. Plate 5.24 was taken by Phumzi to illustrate her experience. The photograph is of her stall in Hill Street. In describing her photograph, Phumzi explained that she is forced to trade illegally on the opposite street because of the location of her particular site. Because of this she is upset that she has to pay a permit fee for a table and shelter that she does not use (Phumzi, 18 June 2007). Phumzi also complained that she does not like her stall because it provides no shelter from the rain. When the weather is bad, Phumzi's stock gets wet and is ruined (Phumzi, 18 June 2007).



Plate 5.24: Phumzi's goods in her stall in Hill Street

6.4 Conclusion

A multitude of different and sometimes contradictory meanings are attached to the home and informal work spaces of female street traders. Whilst some women attach positive meanings to their work spaces, others conceptualise these spaces more negatively. How female traders conceive of their 'public' and 'private' work spaces is socially constructed and is a product of the diverse work experiences of these women. Female traders experience both happiness and hardships at home, for example. Thus the home space can be conceptualised as a space of pride and love, as well as a place of hard work and abuse. Similarly, work in the informal economy can be both difficult and rewarding. As a result, some traders conceive of their informal work space as a space of pride and positive social interaction, whilst for others their informal work space is a space of hard work, conflict, danger and anxiety.

In western spatial discourse the public/private binary is engendered (Rose, 1993; Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1997; Domosh and Seager, 2001). The home space, in the private sphere, is typically conceived of as 'a woman's place', a place of rest, safety and familial love. Housework is understood as women's work and women tend to define themselves in relation to their homes and domestic interaction (McDowell, 1997;

Domosh and Seager, 2001). On the other hand, work in the public sphere is traditionally conceptualised as masculine space. Whilst women are still expected to take care of their families and domestic responsibilities, men are encouraged to leave home to work for a wage. Thus over time public spaces have become associated with stereotypical masculine traits, such as activity, risk and excitement (McDowell, 1997). In their everyday work, however, female street traders move between both public and private spaces. Their work experiences stretch beyond home into the public space of the informal economy. Through working and interacting in these different engendered spaces, female traders construct a multitude of concepts of 'home' and 'work', which both reproduce and challenge traditional ways in which space is conceptualised.

The empirical data reveals that most of the traders that participated in this study enjoy undertaking their housework and caring for their families. For these traders, home is conceptualised as a place of pride and love. In taking pride in their homes and their love for their families, female traders fulfil their traditional roles as mothers, caregivers and homemakers (Domosh and Seager, 2001). These understandings of the 'home' reinforce and reproduce the traditional ways in which the home space is constructed. However, the meanings that female traders attach to their domestic spaces can also be seen to be shaped by their work experiences in the informal economy. Traders who manage successful business are able to afford to buy and furnish their own homes, for example. For these traders, home is a space of pride because their homes, and the appliances that they have purchased for their homes, represent their business success. As both caregivers and providers, owning a furnished home and meeting the needs of their dependants is an important source of pride for many of these women. Conceptualising their home spaces in terms of their ability to provide for their families challenges the traditional ways in which the 'home' is constructed (Domosh and Seager, 2001).

The challenging work schedule of female traders in public space can also be seen to influence gender relations in domestic space. The data reveals that many traders receive help with the domestic chores from their family members. In some instances, husbands or partners share the domestic responsibilities at home. Dudu's partner, for example, helps with the ironing in their household. By completing "*the work of a woman*" in the

home space, the gendered associations of home and domestic chores are challenged. For Dudu, her home is a space of love because her partner shares some of the domestic burden of the housework (Dudu, 27 June 2007).

The data reveals that female street traders attach a variety of other meanings to their home spaces that similarly contradict the traditional gendered ways in which the home is portrayed. The home, for example, is not always a place of rest and relaxation. Nor is the home always a haven of familial love and encouragement (McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Instead, because of the dual roles of female street traders, many of these women struggle to meet their domestic obligations and find housework exhausting. Thus for many female traders the home is a place of hard work, anxiety and unhappiness. Eva's experience of domestic violence illustrates that the home is also not always conceived of as a place of love and support (Eva, 27 June 2007). Instead the home, for many women, is a constructed negatively as place of abuse and suffering.

The nature of work of female street traders also challenges engendered notions of public 'work' space. Because a great deal of time is spent working in urban spaces, public space is conceptualised by the traders as both a woman's and a man's space of work. For many female traders, their work in the informal economy provides them with a diversity of experiences, both positive and negative. In the public space of urban areas, female traders interact with many different people. They forge positive relationships and they enter into conflict. They engage in a range of activities to ensure that their businesses are successful, and some of these activities and experiences are very different from the experiences that they have at home. Trading in the informal economy presents an array of challenges, but it can also be a rewarding experience. In turn all of these experiences influence the meanings that female street traders attach to their informal work space in Hill Street.

The literature review draws attention to the mutually constitutive relationship between spatial concepts and gendered identities. Concepts of space and place are socially constructed, yet these spatial understandings play a role in shaping how individuals construct their social identities (Massey, 1994, 2005; McDowell, 1997). Exploring the

meanings that female traders attach to their work spaces is thus necessary in order to reflect on the identities that female traders construct in relation to their work experiences. The following chapter explores these identities in greater detail.

Chapter Seven

Identities at work

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to identify and reflect on the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work experiences in both public and private space. Moving out of home into the public sphere has resulted in a shift in how female traders conceive of both their work spaces and themselves. The theoretical framework argues that engendered notions of space are socially constructed, yet how society conceptualises space impacts of the constructions of gender definitions. The previous chapter discusses the different meanings that female traders attach to their domestic and informal work spaces. It is argued that the diverse work experiences of female street traders shape how these women conceptualise their work spaces. The multiple constructions of physical ‘home’ and ‘work’ space presented in the chapter both reinforce and contradict conventional notions of the feminine private sphere and the masculine public sphere.

Similarly, in their everyday work, female traders construct multiple identities as mothers, providers, business women and community members. Whilst some of the ways that these women define themselves reflect conventional notions of femininity, other identities challenge the way that gender definitions are constructed. This chapter applies the theoretical concepts to explore the connections between female traders’ conceptualisations of their work spaces and how they define themselves. The chapter consists of four sections. Section 7.2 reflects on the traders’ identities as mothers and how this role has broadened as they work for a wage to support their families. Section 7.3 explores the identities of female traders as providers for their dependants. Being a provider is linked to the how these women define themselves as business women. The identities that female traders construct in relation to their business success are discussed in Section 7.4. Finally, Section 7.5 reflects on the identities that female traders construct as caregivers in their communities.

7.2 Mother

The majority of female street traders are the primary caregivers in their homes. As discussed in Chapter Five, most of the participants in this study are responsible for managing their households and undertaking their domestic chores. Although housework can be exhausting, the majority of the traders gained enjoyment through the fulfilment of their domestic duties. A sense of pride and personal satisfaction is obtained from caring for family members and maintaining a well kept home. Thus through their domestic interactions and experiences, female street traders continue to define themselves as mothers in a traditional sense. Integral to their identity is their sense of themselves as caregivers and homemakers.

Phumzi is particularly proud to be a mother and a caregiver to her extended family. At her home in Clermont, she is the sole provider for her son, four grandchildren and three foster children (Phumzi, 18 June 2007). During her interviews, Phumzi expressed her love for her children. She described how proud she is of her son who is the leader of his Sunday school group at their local church. She also described her affection for her youngest granddaughter, who she stated is never sick and who is always well behaved. In her interview, Phumzi (18 June 2007) commented that this little girl makes her *“happy all the time”*. According to Phumzi, the role of a mother is vitally important in society. To emphasis a mother’s critical role, she told the story of how she began fostering her third foster son. Phumzi was approached in Hill Street by a woman who asked her to watch over her baby whilst she went shopping at a nearby store. Phumzi agreed to watch over the child but the woman never returned (Phumzi, 18 June 2007). After work Phumzi notified the police and took the child to social services. After some time and much discussion, the social workers agreed to let Phumzi foster the little boy. Phumzi explained that it is important to her to give this young child a good, loving home. In her interview, she described the young boy as a *“present”* to her (Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

Most female street traders also define themselves in relation to their role as homemakers. As mentioned previously, these women are primarily responsible for

undertaking their domestic chores in their homes. The majority of the participants take pride in the appearance and cleanliness of their houses and present themselves as homemakers. Nosipho, for example, lives with her partner and their two sons in Clermont. In her interview, Nosipho (18 June 2007) commented that she enjoys maintaining a well kept household, and she mentioned that visitors often comment on how neat and tidy her home is. As discussed in Chapter Five, most female traders also take pride in being able to furnish their houses to make their homes more attractive. Thus the home is a source of pride for female traders who understand that their work as homemakers forms an important part of what it means to be both a woman and a mother. Because housework is accepted as the work of women, these women construct their identities in relation to their domestic responsibilities and experiences. Maria (18 June 2007), for example, commented in her interview; *“I like all housework because I am a women”*.

In embracing their identities as mothers and homemakers, female traders reproduce traditional notions of women’s roles in domestic space (McDowell and Massey, 1996; Domosh and Seager, 2001). Indeed engendered notions of domestic space and understandings of motherhood are mutually reinforcing. Thus through their domestic work experiences, female traders reproduce conventional gender roles and definitions, as well as conventional concepts of home as ‘a woman’s place’ (Domosh and Seager, 2001). However, because many female traders are also the sole providers for their dependants, their identities as mothers include their role as breadwinners.

7.3 Provider

Most of the participants in this study identify themselves as providers for their extended families. Trading in the informal economy is crucial to the survival of female street traders and their dependants. When discussing changing gender roles in contemporary times, the majority of the traders that participated in this study agreed that gender roles are changing as more women have begun working for a wage. In this study eight of the participants have left or have been abandoned by their partners and husbands. These

women have thus been forced to work and have begun trading in Hill Street in order to support their families (see Table 7.1 below).

Table 7.1 Reasons why female street traders live alone and support their families as single parents

Participant:	Left unsupportive partner	Left abusive partner	Left alcoholic partner	Partner in prison	Partner passed away
Cecilia	X				
Eva	X	X			
Phumzi	X				
Jabu			X		
Isabella			X		
Hope				X	
Lindiwe				X	
Ayanda					X

The above table reveals that Cecilia (11 June 2007), Eva (12 June 2007) and Phumzi (18 June 2007) left their husbands or partners because these men were unable to support their families. Eva's partner was also physically and emotionally abusive (Eva, 12 June 2007). Jabu (14 June 2007) and Isabella (14 June 2007) left their partners because they were alcoholics, and the partners of Hope (14 June 2007) and Lindiwe (18 June 2007) are in prison. Ayanda's (11 June 2007) husband has past away.

The movement from the private home space into the public sphere has provided female traders with new opportunities to redefine themselves. Contrary to traditional understandings of gender, in half of the interviews that were conducted in this study, the mother and not the father was described as the head of the household.¹ In these interviews the participants defined themselves as providers in relation to the failure of their male counterparts to fulfil their traditional role in the family. Two dominant themes emerge from the data. Firstly, women are described as taking their family

¹ (Busi, 11 June 2007; Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Lindiwe, 18 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007).

responsibilities more seriously than men, and secondly women are portrayed as stronger and having the initiative that men lack. By constructing identities as providers, female street traders are effectively challenging traditional gender definitions of the male as the provider for their households (Domosh and Seager, 2001).

During their interviews, Cecilia, Busi, and Eva recalled memories of their fathers who they described as good providers for their families. According to these three women, men are not the same as they were in the past. Whilst their fathers took care of their families, the men nowadays were described by these participants as neglecting their responsibilities as husbands and fathers (Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Busi, 11 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007). Thus for many female traders like Cecilia, Busi and Eva, being a mother means taking up the role of both homemaker and provider because, in many cases, husbands and partners are not fulfilling the latter role. As Busi (11 June 2007) noted in her interview, *“a household without a mother will not succeed”* because it is a mother who will always ensure that her children have something to eat and that they are provided for. In her interview, Busi (11 June 2007) explained that she is proud to work because it enables her to feed and educate her children.

Similarly, Cecilia and Eva also defined themselves proudly as providers (Cecilia, 11 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007). In contrast, the men of today were described as being *“irresponsible”*, *“lazy”* (Busi, 11 June 2007) and *“useless”* (Isabella, 14 June 2007). Five of the participants in this study attributed men’s bad behaviour to alcohol and drug abuse.² The majority of the traders also reasoned that men do not care for their families nor do they have the same sense of responsibility as women. Lindiwe, for example, described how in her experience men do not make an effort to ensure that their children have food. Lindiwe lives in Marianhill with her two sons. She is the sole provider for her family as her partner is in prison (Lindiwe, 18 June 2007). In her interview, she explained that when her children are hungry she feels sorry for them and is compelled to better her situation. Men, however, were described by Lindiwe as not having a *“conscious”* and lacking the sense of *“humanity”* that women possess (18 June 2007).

² (Busi, 11 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007; Jabu, 14 June 2007).

For Lindiwe, and many other female street traders, their role as providers is a source of pride and self-worth.

In describing their identities as providers, many female street traders also spoke of the strength and initiative of women.³ Once again these positive female characteristics were defined in relation to the perceived weaknesses of men. According to Eva (12 June 2007) women of today are “*stronger and above men*”. She explained that whilst the men of today sit and wait for employment opportunities, women take the initiative and go out to find work instead of sitting around waiting. Eva has left two partners in her life, both of whom were physically abusive towards her. She is currently the sole provider for her two daughters (Eva, 12 June 2007).

Similarly, Hope and Maria also described women as being “*stronger than males*” (Hope, 14 June 2007) and “*above all the men*” (Maria, 18 June 2007) as they reflected that nowadays it is the women who are working and running their households. Hope is the sole provider for her daughter and her mother who live in Stanger. Hope’s partner is in prison and is unable to support his family (Hope, 14 June 2007). Maria, on the other hand, lives with her husband, her two daughters and her grandchild. Maria’s husband is employed and is able to contribute a small amount towards the household income, however, without Maria’s earnings their family could not survive (Maria, 18 June 2007).

Karabo constructs a similar strong identity of herself as a woman and a provider. Karabo lives alone in Clermont. She is the sole provider for her mother and sister who live in Pietermaritzburg. Karabo is currently in a relationship with a married man who lives with his own family. Karabo’s boyfriend also has another lover in Clermont (Karabo, 14 June 2007). In her interview, Karabo (18 June 2007) explained that it takes “*bravery*” to work as a woman and that she is proud to have taken the “*initiative of the woman*” and begun a business. Thus in defining their identities as providers, many of the participants in this study construct notions of masculine and feminine roles within the family that contradict typical understandings. The traditional male/female binary

³ (Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Karabo, 14 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007; Olivia, 18 June 2007).

becomes inverted, whereby women define themselves as exhibiting superior characteristics to men. Women, as mothers, are proudly heading their households, caring for their families and earning an income (Johnston, 2005; Pratt, 2005). As Karabo (14 June 2007) pointed out, in contemporary times *“some men are running, others are dying. The women stand alone.”*

Despite these negative accounts of men, some female traders view men's role in society more positively. In this study Dudu, Francis and Gertrude described how their partners help them with the domestic chores and support their families. Francis lives with her partner in Pinetown. She has no children but she does send some money to her family in Empangeni each month. Francis's partner has two children from a previous relationship that he supports financially (Francis, 14 June 2007). Francis explained that she is happy that gender roles have changed in today's society because now men recognise women as people. According to Francis men are more *“flexible”* now than they were in the past as they are willing to help with the domestic chores if their partners or wives work. Francis' partner often helps her with the cooking and cleaning, for example, and his income helps support their household (Francis, 14 June 2007).

Gertrude also described her husband as being supportive. Gertrude lives in Sydenham with her son and her partner works in East London. When Gertrude's husband returns home every second weekend, he prepares the family meal because Gertrude returns home from Hill Street after five in the evening (Gertrude, 14 June 2007). She described how she and her husband share the domestic responsibilities when he is at home, and that her husband is also always willing to give her money when she needs it (Gertrude, 14 June 2007).

Because of the nature of work that female street traders engage in, these women negotiate multiple roles and responsibilities on a daily basis. Working for a wage in the informal economy allows these women to support their families and define themselves as providers in their homes. Because the diverse work experiences of female traders are spatialised, it is important to reflect on the meanings that these women attach to their work spaces. The previous chapter presents the multiple ways in which female street

traders construct the home space. The results reveal that female traders conceptualise domestic space as a *space of pride* when they are able to meet the needs of their families. Conceptualising the home space in terms of their ability to provide for their families, challenges conventional notions of men as the providers and heads of their households (Domosh and Seager, 2001). Thus through their everyday work, female street traders are simultaneously redefining traditional notions of space and gender. Beside their identities as mothers and providers, many female traders also define themselves as business women and caregivers in their communities.

7.4 Business woman

As discussed in Chapter Five, most of the participants in this study are proud to be self-employed and portray themselves as business women. Managing their own businesses has provided female traders with the opportunity to buy and furnish their own homes and to provide for their families. Besides constructing identities as homemakers and providers, five of female traders that participated in this study define themselves as business women more purposively.⁴

Dudu's role as a business woman, for example, plays an important part in how she constructs her identity. Dudu takes great pride in how she has been able to expand her trading business in Hill Street. Dudu has managed to secure regular customers over time and she currently has expanded the range of goods that she sells (Dudu, 12 June 2007). Similarly, Eva also defines herself as a successful business woman, and she is proud of her business skills and potential (Eva, 12 June 2007). Eva attributes her business success to the fact that she knows how to treat her customers. Eva's mother was also a business woman, in a similar trade, and she taught Eva how to handle difficult customers (Eva, 12 June 2007). For example, when passers-by insult her because of the type of work that she does, Eva keeps quite and tries to be friendly. She explained that she does this because she understands people and business (Eva, 12 June 2007).

⁴ (Dudu, 12 June 2007; Eva, 12 June 2007; Hope, 14 June 2007; Isabella, 14 June 2007, Nosipho, 18 June 2007).

Being successful business women is also important to how Isabella and Maria define themselves. In their interviews, both Isabella and Maria described their identities in relation to what they had achieved in their lives, and in particular how they overcome incredible difficulties to build successful business ventures (Isabella, 14 June 2007; Maria, 18 June 2007). Isabella (14 June 2007), for example, explained that she is very proud of how far she has come in her life. She described how she was forced to leave school in Grade 6 to help support her family. Since her father abandoned the family her mother became very poor. Isabella (14 June 2007) explained that at fourteen she began brewing and selling home made beer to generate an income. This was difficult to do and she was often harassed by the police. After some time Isabella decided to give up this business and she began trading in Hill Street to support her mother and her sister (Isabella, 14 June 2007). Isabella explained that she is very proud of what she has achieved in life and how she began supporting herself and her family from such a young age. Isabella defines herself as a successful business woman with a natural talent for trading. In her interview, she described her love for her informal work by explaining that selling, "*is in my bones*" (Isabella, 14 June 2007).

Similarly, Maria also defines herself as a proud business woman. Maria (18 June 2007) described how she used to sell earrings for R1 a pair and run a little tuck shop before trading in Hill Street. With the money that she saved from these early ventures, Maria was able to apply for a permit and buy stock to begin her business in Pinetown (Maria, 18 June 2007). Building a successful trading business with little capital and expertise is for her an important achievement (Maria, 18 June 2007).

In describing their business success some of the participants in this study drew comparisons between how men and women conduct business. In this regard, particular notions of masculinity were presented. The women that described the differences between men and women in business tended to position women's business skills above those of their male counterparts. According to Francis (12 June 2007), for example, there are more female street traders in Hill Street than males because women are friendlier and will tolerate difficult customers easier than men. Similarly, Lindiwe (18 June 2007) explained that women are better salespeople than men because they have a

“heart” which allows them to better tolerate customers. Eva (12 June 2007) also mentioned that women make better business people than men by claiming that women are more organised. She also commented that there are more female street traders in central Pinetown because women are much quicker and more organised when it comes to obtaining trading permits for the area (Eva, 12 June 2007). Olivia (18 June 2007) added that women are better at business than men because women know how to save and budget their money wisely. According to Olivia (18 June 2007), this is a skill that men lack.

Thus the empirical evidence reveals that through their work experiences in public space, female street traders are challenging how they think about both themselves and men in society. Public space is an engendered masculine space and traditionally women have been excluded from working in these spaces (Domosh and Seager, 2001). Currently, however, women are reclaiming public spaces for themselves. Not only are women interacting and forging social and business relationships in the public sphere, but they are also running successful business ventures. Taking on traditional masculine roles as business entrepreneurs, female street traders are redefining gender roles and their identities as women.

7.5 Active community member

Many female traders also construct identities for themselves as caregivers and helpers in their communities. In this study Dudu, Eva, Jabu and Nosipho define themselves as community helpers because they are always willing to lend money to their neighbours when they are in need. Dudu (12 June 2007), for example, explained how she feels a sense of pride when her neighbours and friends ask her for money for bus fare or food. Dudu realises that people in her community only ask her for help because they can see that she is doing well, and she is happy to play this role to assist members of her community (Dudu, 12 June 2007). Similarly, Eva (12 June 2007) defines herself as someone who is always willing to help others who are struggling. She noted that she often compares her situation to the lives of other women and she realises that she is

better off than many of her neighbours. Karabo and Phumzi also construct identities for themselves as caregivers in their local neighbourhoods. Whilst Karabo often invites others to eat with her if they have no food, Phumzi described how she is willing to help her neighbours with their cooking and cleaning in times of illness (Karabo, 18 June 2007; Phumzi, 18 June 2007).

Female street traders also construct their identities as caregivers in their communities because of the advice and inspiration that they are able to give to their neighbours. In this respect, Isabella, Lindiwe and Maria described how they encourage other women in their neighbourhoods to begin their own business as they have done. Isabella described how she inspires other women in similar situations by encouraging them *“not to stay at home and fold their arms, but rather to do something”* (Isabella, 18 June 2007). Maria also enjoys helping other women to start their own businesses, and she explained that she is proud of how successfully she has changed some peoples’ lives (Maria, 18 June 2007). Maria told a story of her neighbour who was unemployed. Maria took this neighbour to Durban and lent her some money to buy stock to begin street trading in Hill Street. According to Maria, her neighbour’s business took off and recently she had phoned Maria to invite her to come to her house to see a R4000 wardrobe that she had been able to purchase using the money from her trade (Maria, 18 June 2007).

The work of female street traders in the informal economy empowers these women to play different roles within their communities. The participants in this study are able to provide money and support to their neighbours, and as successful business women they are also able to inspire other women to become entrepreneurs. These different roles and identities both challenge and support traditional notions of gender. By defining themselves as active community members, these traders reinforce constructed notions of women as naturally caring and nurturing. However, because of their informal work, female street traders are also able to define themselves as entrepreneurs and business mentors to others in their neighbourhoods.

7.6 Conclusion

Unemployment and poverty are critical problems in post-apartheid South Africa (Nel et al., 2003). As a result of the lack of job opportunities in the country, many South Africans, and particularly women, work in the informal economy as street traders (Skinner, 2002). In order to survive, these women are tasked with generating an income in the informal economy as well as managing their household responsibilities. Many female traders are the sole breadwinners for their extended families and are primarily responsible for completing their domestic duties at home. In their everyday work spaces, female street traders engage in a wide range of activities and have a variety of experiences. The work experiences of female street traders are described in Chapter Five.

The fact that the work experiences of female street traders take place across the engendered public/private spatial divide is particularly important to this study. These experiences not only influence how female street traders conceptualise their 'home' and 'informal work' spaces, but also contribute to the construction of their identities. The literature reviews argues that concepts of space and gendered identities are mutually constitutive (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999). Because this thesis focuses on the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their work, it is important to consider the meanings that female traders attach to their different work spaces. This discussion is presented in Chapter Six of this thesis. The empirical results reveal that the female traders attach a diversity of meanings to their domestic and informal work spaces. Spaces of 'home' and 'work' are constructed in a multitude of contradictory ways that reflect the individual work experiences of female traders. Whilst some of the meanings of 'home' invoke traditional notions of a safe, loving space, other ways in which the home is constructed contradict these traditional understandings. Similarly, the work experiences of female street traders also influence how public space is conceptualised. In particular, the interactions and experiences of female traders in their informal work space challenge the perceived 'masculinity' of public space (Domosh and Seager, 2001; Johnston, 2005). Through their everyday work, the public sphere is redefined as both a masculine and a feminine work space.

This chapter explores the identities that female street traders construct in relation to their diverse work experiences at home and in the informal economy. The empirical data reveals that female street traders construct multiple identities of themselves and their male counterparts, in relation to their work experiences. Whilst some of these identities, such as mothers, homemakers and community members, reflect traditional notions of femininity, others, such as providers and business women, challenge these norms. A number of writers argue that how actors conceptualises space and place matters to gender and the construction of gendered identities (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999). Society and space are understood to be mutually constitutive, whereby society constructs particular engendered spatial concepts that in turn play a role in both challenging and reproducing notions of gender and gendered definitions. Because of the intimate link between space and gender, if notions of space are challenged, constructions of gender are similarly called into question (Massey, 1994, 2005a; McDowell, 1999).

These theoretical arguments are supported by the empirical evidence in this study. Through the everyday work experiences of female street traders, these women are both redefining how they conceptualise their work spaces and how they define themselves. The reproduction and contestation of traditional notions of space and gender occur simultaneously, and are the product of the experiences and contexts of individual female traders. Furthermore, the empirical evidence illustrates that engendered spaces and gendered identities are linked, in that notions of gender and space are mutually constitutive.

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Interviews

Participant A, 6 June 2007, Manager of the Informal Trade Section of the Pinetown Business Support Unit.

Ayanda, 11 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).

Busi, 11 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).

Cecilia, 11 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).

Dudu, 12 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).

Eva, 12 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).

Francis, 12 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).

Gertrude, 12 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).
Hope, 14 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).
Isabella, 14 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).
Jabu, 14 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).
Karabo, 14 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).
Lindiwe, 18 June 2007, younger female trader (<35 years).
Maria, 18 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).
Nosipho, 18 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).
Olivia, 18 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).
Phumzi, 18 June 2007, older female trader (>35 years).
Sibongile Buthelezi, 1 August 2007, project translator.

Auto-photography interviews

Busi, 2 July 2007, Plates 5.3; 5.8; 5.17
Dudu, 27 July 2007, Plates 5.1; 5.6; 5.7; 5.15; 5.18; 5.20.
Eva, 27 July 2007, Plates 5.14; 5.21; 5.22.
Isabella, 5 July 2007, Plates 5.2; 5.4; 5.12; 5.23.
Maria, 2 July 2007, Plates 5.5.
Phumzi, 2 July 2007, Plates 5.9; 5.10; 5.11; 5.15; 5.19; 5.24.

Photographs

Plate 5.1, Dudu, June 2007.
Plate 5.2, Isabella, July 2007.
Plate 5.3, Busi, July 2007.
Plate 5.4, Isabella, July 2007.
Plate 5.5, Maria, July 2007.

Plate 5.6, Dudu, June 2007.
Plate 5.7, Dudu, June 2007.
Plate 5.8, Busi, July 2007.
Plate 5.9, Phumzi, July 2007.
Plate 5.10, Phumzi, July 2007.
Plate 5.11, Phumzi, July 2007.
Plate 5.12, Isabella, July 2007.
Plate 5.13, Eva, June 2007.
Plate 5.14, Eva, June 2007.
Plate 5.15, Dudu, June 2007.
Plate 5.16, Phumzi, July 2007.
Plate 5.17, Busi, July 2007.
Plate 5.18, Dudu, June 2007.
Plate 5.19, Eva, June 2007.
Plate 5.20, Dudu, June 2007.
Plate 5.21, Eva, June 2007.
Plate 5.22, Eva, June 2007.
Plate 5.23, Isabella, July 2007.
Plate 5.24, Phumzi, July 2007.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Claims of police brutality in Durban (*The Daily News*, 20 June 2007).

By Miranda Andrew, Arthi Sanpathh and Ayanda Mhlongo

Protest action peaked in Durban on Tuesday as police clashed with hundreds of informal traders angered over the arrests of their colleagues.

Police arrested about 500 people on Tuesday and 25 protesters on Monday.

Allegations of police brutality were again rife as Metro and South African Police Service officers armed with shotguns, batons, pepper spray and stun grenades herded protesting traders into waiting police vans. The massive crowd of more than 500 people gathered outside the Durban magistrate's court where 25 traders appeared.

Although the traders carried sticks and stones, onlookers said they were appalled at the way police subdued traders.

Daily News journalists and photographers witnessed numerous incidents in which police randomly assaulted men and women reminiscent of the apartheid-style tactics used by police during political protests.

Metro police had waited for back-up before using rubber bullets, stun grenades, pepper spray and a water canon to disperse the crowds.

They then resorted to grabbing traders by their throats, dragging them and throwing them into the back of police trucks. Some traders who managed to flee were caught further down the road and, according to onlookers, beaten.

Police used batons to strike traders across the face while others held back traders and squirted spray directly into their eyes.

“The trucks are filled to capacity with traders now. Once they are dropped off at holding cells, they will return to pick up the rest,” said one Metro officer.

One woman collapsed and suffered an epileptic fit while another had an anxiety attack. Both traders were made to sit against the court gates and wait.

Among those assaulted was Futhi Mkhwanazi, 31, who claimed she was assaulted by the police after leaving the court.

“We could hear the noise of the protesters from inside the court building and by then the gates were closed so I begged the guards to let me out because I was waiting for a relative to bring me documents that I had forgotten at home.”

“The trouble had already started but I thought that I was going to wait at a distance from the gate so that I could see my relative,” she said.

She said that while waiting a group of traders ran towards her when police threw teargas at them.

“All of a sudden I was grabbed by three officers who began beating me with their batons and swearing. I cried and tried to explain that I was not part of the crowd but they continued,” she said tearfully.

During the scuffle, Mkhwanazi was injured and had to call her brother to pick her up from the police station.

She said she had never seen such brutality from the police.

“I am still shocked and horrified by the way people, including women, were treated. The authorities need to look at this situation seriously,” she said.

Trader organisations have condemned the police actions saying they were merely trying to voice their dissatisfaction with trading laws and facilities.

Said Themba Duma, vice president for the Informal Traders Management Board: “We are trading without proper facilities like water and toilets and cannot do business properly. We are being harassed by police continuously and arrested for no reason.”

“We are here to negotiate and sort out the problem, but Metro does not want to listen. We tried to talk to Metro to allow our people to go, but they don't even want to talk to us,” he added.

In response, South African Police Service spokesperson Superintendent Vincent Mdunge said the protesters had gathered to call for the release of their friends arrested on Monday.

“The roads had to be completely blocked off as the vendors were intimidating officers. We then brought in a water canon to disperse the crowds, however, this made them react violently towards the police officers,” said Mdunge.

“We are not sure as to the number of people arrested at this point as those arrested are still being processed at the Durban Central Police Station,” he said.

The arrested street traders would be charged under the Violation of Public Violence Act, the Public Gatherings Act and the Malicious Destruction to Property Act, he said.

City manager Dr Michael Sutcliffe and Mayor Obed Mlaba were unavailable for comment.

It is believed that Sutcliffe has however launched his own investigation into the actions of the Metro Police.

Appendix 2

KZN traders angry over arrests (*The Sunday Tribune*, 24 June 2007).

By Chris Makhaye

Street hawkers say they are "gatvol" with the eThekweni Municipality for failing to consult them on decisions that affect their livelihood.

The Durban magistrate's court resembled a battleground on Tuesday as SAPS riot units and the Metro Police tried to contain thousands of angry hawkers.

More than 500 were arrested when they blockaded the court, trying to secure the release of 20 colleagues arrested the previous day. The 20 were taken into custody for blocking Metro Police from confiscating goods belonging to traders breaking city bylaws.

"How can you feed your family from such a small place?" Sindiswa Ntshangase was one of the 500 arrested outside the court.

Ntshangase, who sells underwear in Queen Street, said Metro Police sprayed hawkers with teargas and water cannons and assaulted them with batons before arresting them.

She said most of those arrested were women.

"We had to spend a night sleeping on cold concrete floors in passages and toilets because there was no space in cells," said Ntshangase.

In May the traders marched to the Durban City Hall to protest against the city's decision to hike street trading levies from R120 to R430.

Dumisani "Rasta" Mthembu, the Chairperson of the Queen Street traders, said the municipality was intimidating and provoking street traders by reducing the area where they operated without consultation and by confiscating goods.

"I have been selling here since 1996. I feed nine people, including my mother. Now they are reducing the area where I trade. How can you feed your family from such a small place?" he asked, pointing to the 2m by 1m area he has been allocated.

Mthembu said the municipality had failed to honour its undertaking that no traders would be arrested or intimidated while the matter was still being discussed.

Ntombizonke Nene, a second-hand clothes trader from Inanda's Dube Village, who operates near the city's Muslim cemetery, said she had been the victim of several Metro Police raids.

"They take our goods and we have to release them by paying R250 or R400. It is ridiculous," she said.

Velile Gigaba, the Secretary of the Informal Traders Management Board, said the municipality was mistreating traders.

"We struggled against apartheid bylaws and we won. It is very sad that the municipality voted in by us that is treating us worse than the Boers," said Gigaba.

“They have structured the levies to be increased up until 2009. It is clear they want to get rid of us (before the World Cup in 2010). Otherwise, why are they strictly enforcing the bylaws only now?” he asked.

Municipal Manager Mike Sutcliffe denied the allegations. He said the two sides met in 2003 and agreed on a Street Traders Policy.

“We even wrote off more than R3,5-million in levies and they agreed the Metro Police should enforce the policy.”

“We met the leaders of the traders and told them about the increase in levies. They agreed there should be flat levies and we implemented levies of between R39 and R68 a month,” Sutcliffe said, adding that the municipality was willing to be flexible.

“But... we will not allow people to trade in places where they will hamper road safety or encourage loitering,” he said.

More than 500 hawkers have been charged with public violence and have been released on their own recognisances. They are to appear in court on July 27.

But Gigaba believes the matter should be resolved by the traders and the city “to avoid violence, because we are tired of them taking decisions about us without talking to us”.

Appendix 3: Semi- structured interview guide designed for the interview with the Municipal official

Preamble

My name is Tamlynn Fleetwood and I am a geography student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am currently working on my MSoc Sci thesis, and I am interested in undertaking my empirical research within the central Pinetown area. The aim of my study is to explore the working experiences of female informal traders operating within the area, and to understand how female traders construct feminine identities in relation to both their domestic and paid work activities.

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce my study, and to request the permission of the municipality to interview a sample of female traders working in the Pinetown CBD. I would also like to ask you a set of general questions regarding the informal trade in Pinetown, for the purpose of contextualising my study.

- Explain the content of the UKZN consent form and obtain the interviewee's signature

Topics to be covered in the interview

- History of the informal trade in the Pinetown CBD study area
- Process of formalising the trade and the current situation (e.g. number of legal and illegal traders, types of goods sold, process of obtaining trading permits and price of permits)
- Management of the informal trade in the Pinetown CBD area
- Previous research conducted on the informal street trade occurring in the study area
- Monetary compensation for traders

Appendix 4: UKZN consent form used for the interview with the Municipal official

Tamlynn Fleetwood
School of Environmental Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
email: 202520304@ukzn.ac.za



I, Tamlynn Fleetwood, am a geography student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am currently working on my MSoc Sci thesis, and I would like to undertake my empirical research within the central Pinetown area, Durban. The aim of my study is to explore the working experiences of female informal traders operating in the area, and to better understand how female traders construct feminine identities in relation to their diverse work experiences.

For the purpose of my research I aim to interview a sample of female informal traders working in central Pinetown. I would also like to interview you in order to obtain some general information regarding the informal trade in the area. I would greatly appreciate it if you would agree to participate in my study. You can be assured that your identity will remain anonymous, as your name will not be used in any presentation of the results of this research. Your answers will remain strictly confidential, and will remain in my possession only. This information will not be shared with anyone else, and will be used solely for the purpose of completing my thesis, and in future papers and oral presentations. Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time that you wish.

CONSENT STATEMENT:

I understand the nature and purpose of the research and give my consent to participate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research. If you have any further queries you may contact my supervisor (Prof. Dianne Scott).

My contact details are: 072 898 1801

My supervisor's contact details are: 082 855 1100 work: 031- 260 2416

Yours sincerely

Tamlynn Fleetwood

Appendix 5: Interview schedule designed for the initial interviews with female street traders

Section A: Exploring everyday work activities through time and space

Please provide a retrospective account of your working day, describing in detail the time, location and nature of all the tasks that you have engaged in within a twenty-four hour period.

1. Are you responsible for any other domestic duties at home? If yes, what are these duties?
2. What domestic tasks/activities does each member of your household engage in?
3. Are these tasks exclusively performed by the members stated above?
4. Is this your only employment? If no, please could you describe your other employment.
5. What other responsibilities do you have in terms of maintaining your business?
6. How do you manage to trade and run your household?
7. Do your neighbours/community members assist you in managing your household or your business in any way? Please explain.
8. Do you assist your neighbours/anyone in your community with running their households or businesses in any way? Please explain.
9. Do you belong to any local organisations/associations/societies? If yes, please state which ones.
10. Do you have any free time to yourself?
11. What do you like to do in your free time?

Section B: Feelings and experiences of work

1. What do you like the most about your work as an informal trader?
2. Do you find your trade fulfilling? Why / Why not?
3. Do you get any satisfaction from trading informally beside the income it provides? (For what other reasons is your work important to you?)
4. What do you like least about your work as an informal trader?
5. What are some of the difficulties you experience in your trade?
6. What do you like most about your work at home running your household?
7. Do you get a sense of personal satisfaction from engaging in any of these domestic activities?
8. What do you like the least about your work at home running your household?
9. How would you describe your experience of running a business and managing your household?
10. What are some of the positive aspects of running a business and managing your household?
11. What are some of the difficulties of running a business and managing your household?

Section C: Defining roles and identity

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. How would you describe your role as a woman?
3. How would you describe the differences between men and women in your culture?
4. How do you feel about these differences?
5. Are these differences the same now as they were in the past?
6. Do you think that the roles and relationships between men and women changing?
7. Why do think that the roles and relationships between men and women changing?
8. Is running your business made more difficult in any way because you are a woman?
9. How do you overcome these difficulties?

Section D: Background information

1. Where do you live?
2. Who lives in your household?
3. What is the age and gender of each member of your household?
4. Who contributes financially to your household?
5. Do any other members of your household work in the informal/formal sector? If so, please explain what type of work they do.
6. What other income does your household receive?
7. Do you, or does anyone in your household, receive any government grant?
8. Do you, or does anyone in your household, receive any other income from other family members?
9. What do you sell?
10. How long have you worked here?
11. Where do you buy your stock?
12. When do you buy your stock?
13. How much money do you make on average per month?
14. How have you secured this space to sell your goods?
15. How do you store and transport your goods?

**Appendix 6: Consent form used for the interviews with the female street traders
(Zulu translation)**

Tamlynn Fleetwood
School of Environmental Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Email: 202520304@ukzn.ac.za



Ifomu lokuvuma ukusebenzisana Igama lami ngingu **Tamlynn Fleetwood**,
ngingumfundi ofunda e-university yakwa Zulu Natal. Njengamanje ngenza izifundo zami
zemasters kanye nocwango engilwenza maphakathi ne Pinetown eThekwini. Inhloso
yalolucwaningo ukuthi ngithole ulwazi olumayelana nezinto ezenzeka noma esebedlule
kuzo noma abahlangabezana nazo njengabantu abasebenzisa lendawo ngokudayisa
abesifazane.

Inhloso yami ukuthi ngibuze abantu besifazane abasebenza ngokudayisa lana ePinetown.
Ngingajabula kakhulu ukuvuma ukuba ngikubuze noma ukusebenzisana nathi
kulolucwaningo. Okunye kumele wazi ukuthi konke ezokusho noma izimpendulo zakho
sizozigcina ziyimfihlo futhi negama lakho kanye nemininingwane yakho angeke
siyithathe. Izimpendulo zakho angeke sizixoxe nabanye abantu kodwa ngiyozisebenzisa
ezifundweni zami ngoba iyona nhloso yokwenza lolucwaningo, ngiyozisebenzisa
ekubhaleni ngesikhathi esizayo kanye nasekwethuleni izinkulumo. Lolucwaningo
lukhululekile futhi awuphoqiwe uvumelekile ukuthi uhoxe noma ngasiphi isikhathi.

IFOMU LOKUVUMA:

Ngizwile nenhloso yocwaningo futhi ngizoninika isikhathi ukuthi sisebenzisane

Sayina----- Date-----

Ngiyabonga ukuthi uthathe isikhathi ukuze usebenzisane nathi. Uma uneminye imibuzo
ungaxhumana nothisha wami (u Prof. Dianne Scott) kulezinamba 082 855 1100
eyasemsebenzini 031-260 2416.

Eyami 0728981801

Yimina u Tamlynn Fleetwood

**Appendix 7: Consent form used for the interviews with the female street traders
(English translation)**

Tamlynn Fleetwood
School of Environmental Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Email: 202520304@ukzn.ac.za



I, Tamlynn Fleetwood, am a geography student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am currently working on my MSoc Sci thesis, and I am undertaking my empirical research within the central Pinetown area, Durban. The aim of my study is to explore the working experiences of female informal traders operating in the area, and to gain an understanding of how female traders construct feminine identities in relation to their domestic and paid work experiences.

For the purpose of my research I aim to interview sixteen female informal traders working in central Pinetown. I would greatly appreciate it if you would agree to participate in my study. You can be assured that your identity will remain anonymous as your name and personal details will not be taken. In turn, your answers will remain strictly confidential and will remain in my possession only. This information will not be shared with anyone else, and will be used solely for the purpose of completing my thesis, and in future papers and oral presentations. Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time that you wish.

CONSENT STATEMENT:

I understand the nature and purpose of the research and give my consent to participate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research. If you have any further queries you may contact my supervisor (Prof. Dianne Scott).

My contact details are: 072 898 1801

My supervisor's contact details are: 082 855 1100 work: 031 260 2416

Yours sincerely

Tamlynn Fleetwood

Appendix 8: Semi-structured interview schedule designed for the interview with the project translator

1. Section A: Establishing credentials

- a) Please can you describe any other projects that you have worked on, assisting with translations.

2. Section B: Conducting the interviews: translations and language

- a) How do you feel that the interviews went?
- b) What are your general feelings regarding the interviews?
- c) Did you feel that you were adequately able to translate the participants' responses? Please give a reason for your answer.
- c) What difficulties did you experience when translating the participants' responses?
- d) Did you find it difficult to relate the cultural nuances /differences presented in the interviews? If yes, why was it difficult? Please give some examples.
- e) Describe to what extent you feel that the meanings that the women were trying to convey were mediated / changed through your translations?
- f) To what extent do you feel that your translations were shaped by the kind of information that you felt I wanted to obtain?
- g) To what extent do you feel that the participants changed their responses to the more sensitive questions in order to retain a sense of personal dignity? (I refer in particular to the questions related to the traders' monthly income, or to those questions regarding the traders' personal difficulties at work and home).
- h) To what extent do you feel that the questions exploring the links between wage work and a sense of personal independence/ liberation pre-empted particular answers?
- i) How would you describe the language used by the informal traders to communicate their working experiences?
- j) In what ways did the women interviewed use particular isiZulu expressions, or idioms, when describing their experiences? Please give examples.

Section C: Conducting the interviews: positionality

- a) In what ways do you feel that you and I are different to the female informal traders that were interviewed?
- b) To what extent do you think that the traders perceived us as 'outsiders'?
- c) In what ways do you think that your positionality as the translator (e.g. your age, gender, race, class, education) may have influenced the responses provided by the participants?
- d) In what ways do you think that my positionality as the researcher (e.g. my age, gender, race, class, education) may have influenced the responses provided by the participants?
- e) Do you feel that we were able to gain the trust of the women that we interviewed? If yes, how do you feel that we managed this?
- f) Do you think that because we are all women a level of trust was able to be established during the interviews?
- g) Do you feel that the participants were in any way concerned that their responses

would jeopardise their work in Hill Street? If yes, how do you feel that their concerns influenced the responses that they provided?

Appendix 9: UKZN consent form used for the interview with the project translator

Tamlynn Fleetwood
School of Environmental Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
email: 202520304@ukzn.ac.za



I, Tamlynn Fleetwood, am a geography student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and I am currently working on my MSoc Sci thesis. My research project explores the working experiences of female informal traders operating in the central Pinetown area, Durban. This investigation focuses on how female traders construct feminine identities in relation to their work experiences, both at home and in the informal economy.

With your assistance I have completed a set of interviews with a sample of female street traders. I would also like to interview you in order to gain a sense of your experience translating the interviews. I am interested in exploring any difficulties that you may have had in translating the traders' feelings and experiences. I am also interested in discussing the impacts of positionality on the interview process. I would greatly appreciate it if you would agree to participate in this interview. You can be assured that your identity will remain anonymous, as your name will not be used in any presentation of the results of this research. Your answers will remain strictly confidential and will remain in my possession only. This information will not be shared with anyone else, and will be used solely for the purpose of completing my thesis, and in future papers and oral presentations. Participation in this interview is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time that you wish.

CONSENT STATEMENT:

I understand the nature and purpose of the research and give my consent to participate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research. If you have any further queries you may contact my supervisor (Prof. Dianne Scott).

My contact details are: 072 898 1801

My supervisor's contact details are: 082 855 1100 work: 031 260 2416

Yours sincerely

Tamlynn Fleetwood